

Magonia

Interpreting Contemporary Vision and Belief

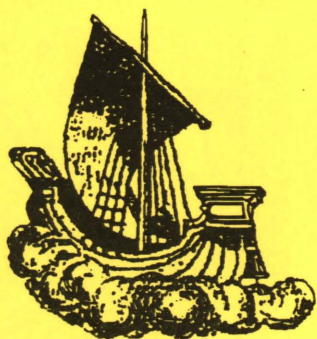
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The Decline and Fall of the Psychosocial Empire



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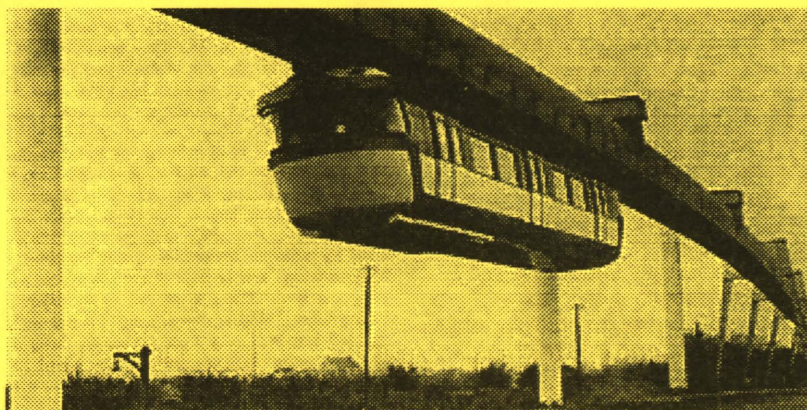
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Peter Rogerson's Northern Echoes



Farewell to Monorail Dreaming

The Fall of Concorde and the End of the Twentieth Century

Every so often this year, the undead but prematurely buried twentieth century has given the odd twitch of life. The fall of Concorde is one such twitch, for it is the end of the last survivor of the forgotten age in which this magazine came into being.

Magonia was born in 1966 as the Merseyside UFO Research Group *Bulletin*, and in that year the teenagers of Warrington were asked to write essays on the future, including their visions of the year 2000. These unique historical documents, preserved in Warrington Library, have a poignant quality, a sort of lost innocence, in their vision of a largely untroubled future. They mix the immediately practical, better traffic flows and the provision of skating rinks, with visions of the city of the future.

You can see this vision in much of the material produced by more professional prophets of the time, the 'secular city', of tower blocks, underground shopping-centres, personal helicopters, and clean, well lit streets, all linked by the great mid sixties symbol of progress, the monorail. Concorde was part of this vision, a stepping stone to the hypersonic aircraft, which would give us a day trip to Sydney, or an afternoon's shopping in New York. By the end of the 1970s there would be the first colonies on the moon, Mars by the mid 1980s (1984 was pencilled in as a year with a particular frisson). 2000 was the distant beacon, the bright, clear, clean world of shiny clothes, flowing architecture, atomic-powered cars, and self-sufficient space stations, the world of 2001: *A Space Odyssey*.

This was to be but the surface of the utopian world to come, the Universal Denmark, where war, poverty and the dead irrational past were to be buried. The White Hot Technological Revolution would scorch away the last remnants of the old world,

forgotten like the disappearing bomb sites, and in its place would come the Great Society, the New Frontier, Space, the Final Frontier. This new world had its great emergence myth; 'by dint of the sacrifice of the war-time generation, the old bad world was swept away, not just Hitler and his crew, but the bad old world of poverty and want, of workhouse and child labour'. This contrast between the dirty, evil, ignorant past, and the bright, glorious present was often drummed into us.

What became of those dreams of monorails and planetary exploration, and the white hot technological revolution and the modernist project which lay behind it? Within a few years there would be large-scale rejection of the secular city and the monorail dream, a major cultural rejection of science, and technology and a revival of the irrational. In 1966 for example, fundamentalist Christianity was seen by modernists as the preserve of a bunch of ageing, rural Elmer Gantreys; Islam would perish before modern science and the Socialist Revolution; the nationalisms of the past would be tamed; and if anyone told you that large numbers of people would believe they had been abducted by aliens, or that there would be literal witch hunts in America and Europe they would have laughed at you.

Monorail dreaming was to fall victim to the antiscientific backlash which developed from the early 1970s onwards; an attitude summarised by Jerome Clark in *The Unidentified*: "Man is on the brink of a catastrophe because our age has denied him the capacity for the belief in the magical and the wonderful. It has destroyed the mystical, nonrational elements which traditionally tied him to nature and his fellows. It has emphasised rationality to the exclusion of intuition,

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The Decline and Fall of the Psychosocial Empire



Anthony R. Brown

THERE ARE, in ufology, two basic schools of thought. The first claims that some or all UFOs are extraterrestrial craft, and that hundreds, perhaps thousands, of individuals are abducted by aliens and un-

ders. Their main claim, however, is the interpretation of reports along extraterrestrial lines.

Psychosocial proponents mainly rest their claim on a denial of the above interpretation, together with an interpretation of their own that claims to be founded on the basic precepts of psychology, psychiatry and sociology.

Hysteria

Hysteria represents the foundation stone upon which the whole Psychosocial model is built. It is necessary, therefore, to give an accurate definition of the term when so much depends on this single item.

The definition of hysteria consists of specific symptoms grouped according to function. Thus there are disorders of movement: paralysis of limbs, muscle spasms, contractures, tics and tremors, ataxia, difficulty in swallowing and loss of voice. Then there are the disorders of sensation and perception: the loss, distortion or exaggeration of any sense modality, touch, pain, heat, cold and position sense. And then Disorders of Mental Function: the most notable being *belle indifférence*; a bland lack of concern regarding the presence of one or more of the above symptoms.

Hysterical amnesia may sometimes be associated with a hysterical fugue: the patient may leave his home or place of work and journey, often ending up at a place that has held some special significance for him at an earlier period in his life - say, his child-

hood home. The amnesia is usually clearly related to some upsetting event - intolerable financial, family or employment stress - and is often of long duration but patchy.

Then there is the hysterical fit. The form of the fit varies according to the patient's conception of epilepsy. The fit nearly always takes place in the presence of others, there's no incontinence, nor loss of consciousness (EEG readings are normal), and the patient rarely injures himself as might be the case in real epileptics.

Hysterical puerilism is a regression to babyhood, complete with babyish language, helplessness and insistence on bottle feeding. And lastly, hysterical pseudodementia, usually a device to avoid military service or responsibility for criminal behaviour - *a la* Pinochet.

Slater and Roth have this to say about hysteria:

"Many patients are seen with symptoms which all would call hysterical, in whom no motivation for the symptom can be discovered despite intensive enquiry. Furthermore, intensive enquiry will frequently persuade the psychodynamically minded clinician that there is motivation for symptoms which few psychiatrists would accept as hysterical. 'Motivation' is not an observational datum but a judgement of a very high degree of subjectivity . . . When one reviews the enormous range of what one has to call hysterical, the quality that emerges as the most plausible single feature

Tweedledum and Tweedledee agreed to have a battle

This article attempts to examine the basic strengths and weaknesses of two warring armies, the ETH and the Psychosocial models and the underlying causes that have contributed to the ferocity and duration of the battle.

dergo traumatic experiences at their hands. This school we may term the extraterrestrial establishment. The second school claims that UFOs are misperceptions or hoaxes, and that abduction claims are either hoaxes or the result of "psychological need". This school we may term the psychosocial establishment. School one claims that UFOs and abductions are real, physical craft and events; School two claims they are not. Both sides will, no doubt, quibble over the details of these basic definitions but, in essence, this is the current state of affairs.

Supporters of the ET Hypothesis mainly rest their claim on a surface reading of the reports and rarely, if ever, garner other arguments to bolster this claim. They do not, for example, quote Drake's equation on the possible number of habitable planets supporting intelligent life in our Galaxy as an argument in their favour. Probably, the most they would claim would be the huge number of stars and galaxies that might be sites for extraterrestrial life. This is the Argument from Large Num-

constant to all cases is the tendency to dissociation, to a breakdown in central nervous integration. This can be seen in unmistakable form in hysterical paralysis, anaesthesias, twilight states, loss of memory; but it is also visible in the *belle indifférence*, which permits the hysterical patient to suffer distressing complaints without their normal emotional consequences . . . Hysterical symptoms are commonest at the two ends of life, before the organisation of the central nervous system has yet achieved maturity, and after it has entered on its decline." (E. Slater & M. Roth, Mayer-Gross Salter & Roth: *Clinical Psychiatry*, 3rd edn, London, 1969, pp. 107-108)

I contend that not a single abductee has been shown to display any of the above symptoms, either in their behaviour or their abduction accounts.

This brings us on to the next important fact concerning hysteria: that of its incidence in the general population. Hans Eysenck, of the Institute of Psychiatry in London, has said: "...this disorder (hysteria) ... has almost completely disappeared in modern times - when one of my PhD students wanted to investigate the ability of hysterics to form conditioned reflexes, he was unable over a period of years to find more than a very small number of patients showing even rudimentary signs of this classical disorder". (H. Eysenck, 1985) If it's that rare in the psychiatric population, you can be absolutely sure that it is infinitely rarer in the general population.

Dissociation of Tutankhamen

The phenomenon of hysterical dissociation has been elucidated above and its over-riding manifestation is in the *belle indifférence* that is the *sine qua non* of hysteria. However, Psychosocialites make a fundamental error when they equate the extremely rare phenomenon within hysteria of multipersonalities with both a skill that can be exercised by anyone who is deemed to have a psychosocial 'need' to be resolved, and the phenomenon of alien abduction and, for example, reincarnation.

Multipersonalities represent but one symptom of hysteria where other symptoms and conditions are necessary to qualify

as a case of hysteria. The ability of someone to exhibit multipersonalities in the absence of the other symptoms of hysteria immediately disqualifies the diagnosis being made - merely Shakespearean actors who also lack the *belle indifférence* that is such a defining symptom. Slater and Roth suggest that: "It seems that these multiple personalities are always artificial productions, the product of the medical and literary interest that they arouse." (*ibid.*, p. 113)

When an hysterical patient's integration of their personality breaks down into multiple personalities, they are not claiming that these different personalities apply to anybody but themselves - they do not have one aspect of their personality that they claim is Tutankhamen! Their multipersonalities refer directly to aspects of themselves at the present time.

Abductees may believe that they are abducted by aliens, but they never claim to be anybody other than their everyday selves. People claiming to have been Tutankhamen in the remote past do not claim that they are Tutankhamen now, nor that their reliving of Tutankhamen's alleged lifestyle under hypnosis in the present constitutes a different aspect of their present personality.

So to claim that dissociation of the personality in the above contexts is but a skill anyone can exhibit, or that it exists in abductees or believers in reincarnation is simply not true. It is perverse to claim that it is.

Argument from Analogy

A further assertion of the Psychosocialites is that the abduction phenomenon is but one of many similar phenomena, and that what is likely to be true of abductions is also likely to be analogous to these other older phenomena. One or two of these claimed similar phenomena are, for example, possession and Witchcraft - both of which are also claimed to be delusions!

Now I might claim that the moon is analogous to the sun. Indeed, both share common characteristics: both revolve on their axes, both have gravitational fields, both are impacted by meteorites and asteroids, both have north and south poles, etc. However, there the similarities end. Their differences far outweigh their apparent similarities, so try-

"There is no greater nor more frequent mistake in practical logic than to suppose that things that resemble one another strongly in some respects are more likely for that to be alike in others"

ing to explain the unique characteristics of one (say, the conversion of hydrogen to helium) simply cannot apply to the other. And this leads to a fundamental observation when one is using the Argument from Analogy, to wit:

"There is no greater nor more frequent mistake in practical logic than to suppose that things that resemble one another strongly in some respects are more likely for that to be alike in others." and that:

"Any two things resemble one another just as strongly as any two others, if recon-dite resemblances be admitted." (C.S. Pierce, *Essays in the Philosophy of Science*)

So to claim that we can understand the phenomena of the sun by studying the moon is a bit of an exaggeration. The mental mechanisms that lead to an abduction narrative are not the same as those that lead to demonic possession. Their fundamental characteristics are entirely different. Additionally, the possessed person may hold the belief that the Devil possesses his soul, but the actual phenomenon of possession itself is not a delusion - such phenomena actually exist and can be experimentally reproduced.

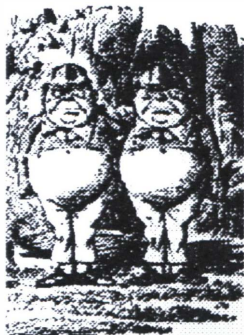
Having said that, there remains an important observation: That similarities in one phenomenon may give ideas about how to design better or different experiments when investigating the phenomenon being studied. This is precisely where accounts of fairies and angels may be useful adjuncts to thought when addressing UFOs.

Imaginary Abductees

A major claim for the Psychosocial Hypothesis as an explanation for the alien abduction phenomenon is Lawson's experiment with imaginary abductees. The assertion is that anyone can fabricate

an abduction account under hypnosis, even those who claim to be ignorant of science fiction material and 'real' abduction narratives. But also buried in this claim is the additional assertion that this material is so pervasive in society that nobody can truly be said to be ignorant of sci-fi and real abduction narratives. The assertion can be stated thus: Because the influence of sci-fi films, TV and magazines is so pervasive in society, there is no such thing as an abduction virgin - that everybody knows what goes on in these stories and anyone can therefore construct a convincing abduction account under hypnosis. The assertion further claims that Lawson's 'virgins' had no interest in nor detailed knowledge of UFOs and abduction narratives and, by extension, that their ability to produce convincing abduction narratives is due to cultural factors.

But wait a minute - haven't we just determined that abduction narratives are due to hysteria in real abductees? So are Lawson's virgins suffering from hysteria? And if the virgins are not hysterics, is their ability due to cultural factors? So how do we tell whether real abductees are cultural victims or hysterics? If a phenomenon (alien abduction) is caused by condition X (hysteria), then demonstrating the phenomenon in others surely implies condition X (hysteria). You can't say that the same phenomenon (alien abduction) occurs in condition X (hysteria) and attempt to prove it by claiming a different condition (sci-fi) in other subjects. If abduction virgins are not hysterics, and yet these same virgins produce the same results as hysterics, then this surely tells us that hysteria is not a necessary condition of the phenomenon. And if this is the case, then it throws considerable doubt on the hysteria model. So do we



have two entirely separate causes for the same phenomenon: one group of hysterics and one group of sci-fi victims producing identical abduction accounts?

Now these virgins, we are assured, had no knowledge of nor interest in UFOs and abductions - which begs the question: How did they acquire their detailed knowledge? Having no knowledge of nor interest in UFOs would seem to suggest that they did not see sci-fi material! Reading sci-fi books and watching sci-fi films holds no interest for them. So how can they display convincing abduction narratives when they had no knowledge of them? Lawson supplied them with the very information they claimed to be ignorant of. So what, exactly, was the whole point of the exercise? Before these virgins actually related their narratives, they were no longer virgins - Lawson was their teacher. And if Lawson had to tell them what to imagine, then this knocks on the head the claim that sci-fi material is so pervasive in society that anyone can construct a convincing abduction narrative. You can't have it both ways - you can't claim sci-fi pervasiveness and have to rely on teachers to supply the necessary information. Either sci-fi and abduction accounts are all pervading, or they're not. So which is it? The entire argument from sci-fi rests for its effect on its very pervasiveness. The need for teachers to cue subjects throws considerable doubt on this assertion. The very point that the experiment is claimed to prove (the pervasion of sci-fi material) ends up triumphantly demonstrating the exact opposite!

Had Lawson only instructed his naive subjects to imagine being abducted by aliens, and had not given them the structural and content details, that

could have been both interesting and revealing. Had he said, "Imagine you are being abducted by space aliens", and left it at that, then that would have been far better. The experiment was flawed from the start because the aim of the experiment had not been thought through. As it was, Lawson committed the very sin that the sceptics have always accused the abduction investigators of committing - cueing the subjects. There's no point having abduction virgins if you start out by telling them what to think and imagine.

If it is claimed that the experiment was designed to show the conviction of the acting and, therefore, that real abductees are only acting, then the significant issue is missed entirely. For the comparison of real and imaginary abductee accounts is not about acting ability, but the content of the actual accounts. It is content comparison that will reveal meaningful information, not whether one subject screams louder or longer on the operating table than another. The question is: Does a medical exam take place or not? It is not a question of awarding Oscars for performance.

Now if it's claimed that Lawson only supplied rough guide-lines to the virgins, but that they still revealed details indistinguishable from real abduction accounts, then this strongly suggests that the virgins are suffering from a form of amnesia. How can this be so? Simply because the virgins produce accounts identical to real abduction accounts, and the real accounts and sci-fi material are the only source of the information. Therefore the virgins must have read or seen the material in the first place to be able to reproduce it under hypnosis. They claim not to have seen this material before, thus they are suffering from faulty memory retrieval and do not realise it. If this scenario is deemed untenable for all the virgins, then perhaps the virgins had previously experienced the same or similar anomalous and traumatic events as the real abductees but have never interpreted them in space alien terms. This approach would seem more productive than resorting to mystical and occult avenues such as ESP contamination from the experimenter.

So the whole issue of the Lawson experiment comes

down to direct comparison of both real and imaginary abduction accounts, for the accounts themselves will reveal whether or not the special qualities of the real accounts are the same as the imaginary accounts. To show that imaginary abductees are the same as real abductees then, it must be shown that these special qualities occur in both sets of accounts. Surface similarities are simply not sufficient criteria to satisfy this demand. There is a real, deep and unique phenomenon in the real accounts: it remains to be proven that such meaningful patterns occur in the imaginary accounts.

Sci-Fi, Physiognomy and Fashion

It has been postulated that the Betty and Barney Hill abduction was due to the influence of the sci-fi films of the 1950s. Indeed, Kottmeyer has gone to extraordinary lengths to claim that a specific film was the origin of their experience. There are two important points that are never addressed in such assertions. The first is that there is not a single case from the decades of sleep and dream research where a film has ever been partially duplicated by subsequent dreaming. True, a disturbing film can affect subsequent dreams, but it is only the emotional tone of the film that may be thus reflected in following dreams. The dream imagery and story are always different from the film. The emotional tone might be virtually identical in both film and subsequent dream, but never the imagery and story.

The second point is that no matter how compelling the comparison between film and subsequent dream is, the idea comes crashing to the ground unless it can be established that the Hills actually saw the film. You can speculate and analyse until the cows come home, but unless you've actually confirmed that the Hills saw the film in question, then the whole exercise is pointless.

I have lost count of the number of UFO investigators and writers who have agonised, speculated, theorised and argued over the physical appearance of our extraterrestrials. It has been a constant source of puzzlement as to why some aliens are short, while others are tall; why some have large heads, while others are

small; why some are bald and others have hair; why some have teeth, while others have none; why some are grey-skinned, while others are tanned; why some have no nose and others have one; why some are nude, while others wear clothes; why some have large eyes, while others are small; why some look oriental, while others are Nordic, and so on.

Kottmeyer has gone to great lengths to trace the history of alien appearance and fashion through the development of science fiction literature, and so link it to present-day aliens. But what have we learnt from all this comparative physiognomy and fashion? What more do we know today, than we did before this exercise in physiognomy and sartorial elegance began? Has it told us anything new or significant about UFOs and abductions that we didn't know before? I contend that it hasn't!

When Hufford came to study the Old Hag Phenomenon, he collected as many accounts of the phenomenon as he could, and set about looking for recurring elements within the accounts. Eventually, he discovered that the hallucinations, the paralysis, the fight for breath, and the terror that characterised the Old Hag Phenomenon fitted perfectly the major components of the Narcoleptic syndrome. At no stage did he consider that the descriptions of the Old Hag sitting on the victim's chest had any relevance to the clinical picture at all. It did not matter in the slightest whether the Hag squeezing the life breath out of the terrified sleeper was a wizened old crone or a comely wench.

So trying to divine the important components that go to make up the abduction experience by the physical appearance of our extraterrestrials is unlikely to tell us much of importance. Just as a real Old Hag sitting on the sleeper is an impossible story, so the appearance of a real alien abducting humans is an impossible story. Trying to find meaning in an impossible story is a red herring. The Old Hag didn't help solve the problem: neither do the Greys, nor the Nordics, nor the Giants. Whether they wear multi-coloured suits or appear stark naked tells us absolutely nothing.

Purpose and Need

Psychosocialites assert that the

phenomenon of alien abduction is driven by a conscious or subconscious desire on the part of the abductee to resolve a personal crisis by constructing subconsciously a drama (the abduction) that seeks to resolve the crisis, and that this resolution signals a change of direction in the witness's life. That the behaviour of the abductee can be easily divined by the end result - the new outlook on life.

There is a concept within psychology which neatly sums up the true complexity in trying to interpret someone else's actions or behaviour and, by observing these actions, attributing moral, ethical or motivational judgements to that person. Consider the following:

When an observer (one-self) observes the behaviour of an actor (someone else) the observer invariably tends to assign moral or motivational judgements to the actor which they never apply to themselves. If I see my neighbour digging his garden while his wife is busy with the week's laundry, I might think he is being selfish by not assisting his wife with the washing. or, again, I might surmise that that he is selfish in not helping Mr Jones, across the street, to put up his new fence. However, if I, the next day, also work in my garden, then I do this because my growing vegetables will help ease our weekly food bill, or benefit my children's health by providing fresh, green vegetables. So I attribute to myself an entirely different motivational judgement to the one which I apply to my neighbour, although we both perform the same actions. So attributing motivational assessments or judgements to other people can be fraught with methodological difficulties.

Returning to our abductee, how do we know that the altered outlook on life following their experience is not an attempt to bring some sort of order back into their lives after the unsettling, disturbing and unpredictable experiences that they have recently encountered? If some unpredictable and inexplicable event occurs to someone (say, the loss of a young child in a freak accident), might not their behaviour after the event be an attempt to bring some sort of predictability and purpose back into their lives after such an upsetting experience? So how do we accurately assess which moral

or motivational factors apply in any given event?

The model of psychological need that is proposed by the Psychosocialites presupposes that the actor (abductee) has a pre-existing need to be resolved when it may be postulated that it is the very nature of the anomalous experience that could initiate a reappraisal of the world where such unpredictable and inexplicable events can occur. The abductee's previous stable view of the world is made uncertain and capricious by the nature of their recent disturbing experience. Their attempt to reassess their new world may result in trying to gain more control over their lives - to try to establish as much faith in their new world as they managed to achieve in their old world.

The Psychosocial model, besides presupposing a need, also asserts a purpose. What is more, this purpose is a two-fold concept: it is claimed that the abduction serves a purpose by resolving a personal crisis, but also that the encounter serves a biological purpose - that it actually has survival value, and further, that these purposes are built into the organism (the witness) by a designer.

Well! There is so much to comment on here that it would take several pages to address the evolutionary and religious issues indicated, but I will try to make a couple of important points. Firstly, regarding the Argument from Design, I can only recommend Dawkins's excellent treatment of this argument in his work *The Blind Watchmaker* - essential reading for those convinced that because a complex organ or biological process exists, this implies design by a Creator. The second is that if an anomalous experience had survival value, and therefore qualified as being purposeful, then that phenomenon (e.g. hallucination) would be a permanent feature of the organism and not an indication of pathology. The fact that hallucination is common in some psychiatric illnesses strongly suggests that it does not have survival value. For example, some hallucinating schizophrenics commit suicide precisely because their hallucinatory voices tell them to do so. Lastly, just because an experience is anomalous, this does not preclude the witness accepting a rational explanation. Thus it ceases to be anomalous to the witness,

and if it ceases to be anomalous, then any claimed survival value is presumably cancelled.

Improbable Improbabilities

If, in the course of everyday conversation, we make the remark that such and such an event is probable or improbable, then this statement represents only a general opinion of the person saying this. Taken in this context, we cannot assign any degree of either its truthfulness nor of its likelihood of ever occurring. Consequently, such vague and unspecific opinions of probability have no real weight and so have no place in an hypothesis where such probabalistic opinions form a substantial condition for accounting for a phenomenon.

When it is claimed that life exists elsewhere in the Galaxy, we are immediately presented with two kinds of probability. When a true coin is tossed we do not know in advance what the outcome will be, it could either be heads or tails. Even then, it may not be enough to give an accurate estimate of the chances of heads or tails if we obtain 99 heads and only 1 tail in an experiment. We need to run many such experiments to establish any sort of result that reflects a chance outcome. Once we have established that Event 1 (heads) and Event 2 (tails) are roughly equal outcomes we can then say that the result of one toss of the coin will result in a 50:50 probability of coming down heads. By knowing that there are only two possible outcomes (the two sides of the coin), and by experimentation finding that the coin is true, we can give a meaningful probability figure to a single toss - by knowing through experimentation that it must be one or the other, and by understanding the laws and conditions that govern the law of falls can we make such theoretical probabilities about a similar event occurring elsewhere. Thus we can make theoretical probabilities about the outcome to the coin tossed both in the UK and, say, the USA.

When we attempt to apply values of probability of life occurring elsewhere in the Galaxy we are thrown on to theoretical possibilities which are not in any way meaningful. For example, as we don't know how life originated on Earth, nor what necessary and sufficient conditions were needed

for life to actually arise, then we have no way of knowing whether such unknown conditions can or cannot occur on other possible planets in the Galaxy.

Claims for extraterrestrial life depend crucially on these conditions of probability, and their lack in the ETH precludes making any such probabilities. So the question becomes: Does the Psychosocial Hypothesis lack just these sorts of conditions that prevent a meaningful assessment of probabilities either that it constitutes a sound theory or whether it qualifies as being more probable than the ETH?

Let's take just one example: the Collective Unconscious. Now according to this theory "the significant memories of the human race are a part of everyone's heritage. This, Jung thought, might account for the similarity of symbols and myths found in widely separated areas over the Earth." What is more, this heritage contains "residues from the animal past and are part of the Collective Unconscious". (C. Thompson, *Psychoanalysis: Evolution and Development*, London, 1952, p. 165) To Jung "it represented the wisdom of the ages". So to put the concept in modern terms we may state that: the Collective Unconscious consists of a group of specific memories handed down from mother to child in every generation and in all societies. It is, in other words, a powerful genetic property of the organism. It applies to everybody everywhere, whether or not one cares to believe in its reality! It follows, therefore, that this remarkable gene can be traced either directly by its unfailing appearance, or be implied by its absence in people who suffer genetic abnormalities. Perhaps the ones who don't have this gene are the very ones who cannot believe in its reality?

Not a shred of evidence exists for the Collective Unconscious, genetically or otherwise, so we can never observe that it exists and, unlike our very real two-sided coin, we are unable to make either empirical observation and deduction or theoretical probabilities for it ever to actually appear. What is true of the Collective Unconscious is also true for the Id, the Ego, the Superego, and all the other inventions of Freudian and Jungian psychology. We can never assign a probability rating for any of them

to appear in any particular set of circumstances.

The probability of the existence of the Collective Unconscious is roughly equal to claims that real aliens are abducting humans.

Necessary and Sufficient

To watch a drama on television it is a necessary condition to have an author and actors, but their existence is not a sufficient condition to satisfy the drama's appearance on your TV screen. Equally, resistors and capacitors are a necessary condition for the reception of the drama on your TV screen, but these are not sufficient conditions to account for the drama, even with the author and actors - one also needs a power supply, for example. But one can list which conditions are necessary conditions with great accuracy, and one can say which of these necessary conditions have to be present for the phenomenon (the drama) to actually appear on your television.

So when one postulates a theoretical model to account for a phenomenon (alien abduction) one must be able to say which of the elements that go to make up the model are necessary conditions for the phenomenon, and which of these necessary conditions are also sufficient conditions for it actually to appear. Now if we say that hysteria and the Collective Unconscious are necessary conditions for the phenomenon, are they, on their own, sufficient conditions for the abduction phenomenon actually to appear? That is, every time that these necessary and sufficient conditions appear, the abduction phenomenon will appear. If hysteria and the Collective Unconscious are necessary but not sufficient conditions, then one must work out, either theoretically or experimentally, what other necessary conditions must be present for the phenomenon actually to appear. To simply list a raft of generalise categories without specifying their precise definition and behaviour in the model is simply meaningless. One might claim, for example, that electronic components are needed to produce the TV drama, but there are many such components that simply do not have any relevance to the transmission or reception of television signals. Thus, vague and woolly statements to the effect that "anyone who subconsciously

wishes to produce an abduction can find within himself the necessary resources to fabricate a detailed and coherent abduction story" are meaningless. Exactly what resources are necessary? What are their characteristics? How many of these posited resources are there at any given time? How does one detect their presence? What constitutes the definition of the subconscious? How do you detect it when it is in operation? What can this subconscious do and not do? And if anybody can display these resources, how was this "fact" discovered? One has to be quite precise in one's definitions for the model to have any meaning or usefulness at all. So if I wanted to design an experiment to test abductees for the presence of the subconscious, exactly how do I go about it? How can I recognise it when it appears?

Once we have determined which conditions (hysteria, etc.) are necessary and sufficient conditions, this means that the removal or absence of any one of them from an abduction case invalidates the entire theory. The theory is in ruins. If the experiment fails, down comes the entire edifice. There are no "ifs" and "buts" about it, one cannot suddenly shift your definitions. The theory is Dead In The Water!

It is the definitions of individual elements and their necessity to be present that defines the whole model. Take one away, and the model collapses. Remove resistors from your TV set and the drama disappears.

Flexibility and Richness

Flexibility and richness of explanatory power are judged these days as poor criteria for any theory. If a theory predicts that certain events or phenomena will behave in a certain way, and the predicted behaviour takes a different course, such a flexible and rich theory will often be able to account for the unexpected results. For example, if it is predicted that extraterrestrials will do this or that, and the expected events fail to appear, such a theory will be able to give an explanation for the discrepancy. And if the aliens do none of these things, then the aliens have a reason for doing nothing. So no matter what behaviour the aliens do or do not carry out, this is still explained by the ET theory. In other words, the ETH

has great, indeed unlimited, flexibility. There is always some property of the theory to cover every eventuality, and this flexibility gives the theory great richness of explanatory power.

In contrast, Newton's theory of planetary motion is very restrictive in what it can and cannot explain. It applies only to areas involving inverse square fields of attraction and cannot be applied, for instance, to explanations of planetary formation. It addresses a specific area of astronomical phenomena, and does not cross into areas completely separate to such phenomena.

Now we have shown above that one of the major flaws of theory design - flexibility and richness of explanatory power - applies to the ETH. So does the Psychosocial Hypothesis suffer this same major flaw? I contend that it does. Consider the following:

The Psychosocial Hypothesis posits that hysteria is a fundamental condition of the phenomenon of alien abduction. No matter how successful or otherwise Janet was in curing the condition through the use of hypnosis, his ideas, theories, and methods of treatment rely exclusively on the manifestation of hysteria as a medical entity. So the Psychosocial model rests its foundation on a medical condition, and the claim is made that this same condition manifests in the abduction phenomenon. When doubt is expressed that hysteria is present in all abductees, the explanation is offered that the cause of the abduction is actually the pervasiveness of sci-fi material (Lawson's experiment). When it's pointed out that Lawson's virgins are not knowledgeable or interested in sci-fi material, the explanation is offered that they suffer - or, indeed, are guilty of - cryptomnesia. Thus we have moved from a medical disorder (hysteria) into a completely unrelated area of cultural influence (sci-fi), and on to a suggestion of plagiarism! All within one experiment! This tiny example takes us from medicine to culture to possible criminality. At every step there are grounds for claiming that the theory has been falsified, but such evidence is ignored, to be replaced with the rescue plan.

Perhaps we can give an even more graphic example. The

Psychosocial model contains the following elements:

Hysteria; Multiple personalities; Folie a deux; Undernourishment; Illness in general; Sleep paralysis; Disturbed body chemistry; Menopause; Anxiety; Lifestyle change; Fatigue; Physical pain; Drugs and medication; Sensory deprivation; Sensory overload; Meditation; Crowd excitement; Phobias; Hope; Expectation; Doubt; Approach of death; Religious ecstasy; Bereavement; Battle excitement; Anticipation; Allergy; Sci-fi; Physical isolation; Lunar phase; Atmospheric; Earthquakes; Immediate crisis; Temporary crisis; Long-term crisis; and Chronic crisis.

So, if it's claimed that hysteria, menopause, doubt and bereavement cause the abduction, and it is pointed out that this does not seem to apply to a particular case, then it can always be claimed that some other element must have been in operation as well. Perhaps an earth tremor was on the way? And if a personal crisis is claimed to be present in the case, then if it's not an immediate crisis, maybe it is a long-term one, or failing that, a chronic one. If one item fails then there is always a fleet of lifeboats around the stricken vessel to effect a rescue.

As if this were not bad enough, Rogerson has recently claimed that "Fears of science; Love-hate feelings toward high-tech medicine; Guilt feelings about animal experiments; Loss of autonomy; Feelings about abortion; Other sexual problems; Abductors as parental figures; Abductors as bureaucrats; and more besides, could be expected to play a part". And what is more, abductions "mean different things to different people and serve different purposes", and that "meanings change over time"! So if one set of items are said to explain most abductions in the past, these no longer apply because the items are constantly changing and their meaning constantly changes - what is said to apply ten years ago no longer applies today. There seems to be no limit - like the ETH - on what is or is not applicable: motives change, conditions change, and so we can never get to grips with the phenomenon ever. The flexibility and richness of explanatory power that the Psychosocial model demonstrates is hardly any different from the rescue plans that

are offered by proponents of the Extraterrestrial Hypothesis.

Folklore

Perhaps the most influential book ever to fall into the hands of the Psychosocialites was undoubtedly Vallee's *Passport to Magonia*. No other work has been so misunderstood, misused and abused by psychologically minded ufologists and writers. It is responsible for much of the thinking along the lines of religious visions and folklore, and has, though it was not its aim or design, encouraged more misunderstanding, woolly thinking and uncritical assertions than any other single work. In it, Vallee sought to muse on the parallels between folklore and religious visions on the one hand and UFOs on the other. *Passport* contains much of the material that is still quoted by Psychosocialites, from Springheel Jack to fairies and intercourse with the Devil.

Passport represented Vallee's first excursion into the world of literature. It is not about UFOs, does not claim to be, and never has its author claimed so. Indeed, Vallee's many warnings in the book that it is not a scientific book, and that it does not even address the problem of the UFOs, went, by most readers, completely unheeded. However, this fact proved to be no curb on psychologically minded enthusiasts when it came to explaining UFOs.

On the first page of Vallee's Preface he states that "the physical characteristics, the psychological behaviour, and the motivation of their (the UFOs') occupants ... are the subject of *Passport to Magonia*". And on the very same page he says, "It is not a scientific book". On the following page he says, "The public is greatly interested in the possible scientific solutions to the flying saucer problem ... But this book does not answer this need. I say it once more: this is not a scientific book." And a little later, "I am not trying to solve any problem, to promote any theory ... I frankly confess it: I entirely forgot that I was a scientist by profession when I began the manuscript of *Passport to Magonia*". All these warnings, cautions and qualifying statements are made before we get to Chapter One!

There follows a very interesting collection of UFO cases, examples from fairy lore and re-

ligious visions, and comments by churchmen. Some of the accounts, especially from fairy lore, are so atmospheric that one could almost picture oneself in fairyland. The book is interesting and charming. At the end of the book Vallee points out how all these reports (of UFOs, fairies, religious visions) seem to suggest a common pattern regarding the formation of human beliefs. He shows how it may be possible that similar phenomena may be responsible for these beliefs. And then he underscores his point that this observation "has little to do with the problem of knowing whether UFOs are physical objects or not". For it tells us about belief and not fact. Now the important lesson from this is that a belief tells us nothing about the phenomenon - we learn nothing of UFOs, fairies or angels, from what people believe the phenomenon to be. So what is the value of *Passport*? Its value is in suggesting avenues of enquiry into UFO reports that may contain similar or the same common elements as appear in accounts of fairies and angels. There are many such clues within Vallee's book, but I have not seen recognition of this fact in the UFO literature. No articles or books have appeared drawing attention to the common elements and avenues of experimentation suggested in the reports in *Passport*. Fairies and extraterrestrials may be a myth, but this observation is not a solution to the mystery of either fairies or UFOs. I'm not saying it's not the right solution. I'm not even saying it's the wrong solution. I'm saying that it's no solution at all! And calling UFOs and fairies 'folklore' is no solution either.

Perhaps I can illustrate this vital point. If I hide behind a hedge armed with a clay-pigeon catapult and launch several clay pigeons over the heads of an unsuspecting group of people on the other side of the hedge, this might generate a number of accounts amongst the witnesses. These same witnesses may come to the belief that the clay pigeons are, in fact, extraterrestrial craft. So we have reports containing hard information (speed, colour, shape, etc.), and the belief amongst some or all of the witnesses that they are extraterrestrial. Now it may be claimed later that these accounts represent folklore, but labelling them thus does not solve the na-

ture and origin of the objects. Some believe it's a myth, some that it's folklore, but none know that they're clay pigeons. But one may be able to solve the puzzle by identifying the meaningful information in the reports.

Passport represented an opportunity for those who had not undergone the rigours of training in scientific method a way of "explaining" UFOs and abductions. It became the archetypal Free Lunch where solutions could be asserted when lack of scientific knowledge and methods had prevented solutions before.

Confusing Criticism with Validation

How can it be that anyone can confuse the criticism of one theory (your opponent's) with the establishment of one's own? Amazing as it seems, this does actually happen. One famous and respected UFO writer (I shall spare his blushes and not name him) has said:

"I cannot prove (the ETH) wrong ... All I can do is set out the aspects of the abduction phenomenon which discourage me from seeing them as physical events. None of these is sufficient to invalidate the (ETH); but together, they do, I think, show it to be weaker than it appears at first sight. Equally, none of them is sufficient to establish beyond question a psychosocial scenario, but together, I suggest, they show it to be a more plausible interpretation."

If you make a criticism of someone else's theory, this does not add to the likelihood of a different theory (one's own) being any more valid than before. Your theory does not suddenly gain strength or validity by the mere fact of your criticising another. Even if you were able to prove the other (ETH) theory wrong, so that it could never raise its head again, this still has zero effect on the strengths or weaknesses of your own. So claiming your own theory is more probable or plausible purely on the grounds of criticising another indicates a fundamental error of reasoning and a confusion of the most basic principles in an argument. The strengths or weaknesses of one theory have no effect on those of another, for each stands or falls on its merits.

Trying to divine the important components that go to make up the abduction experience by the physical appearance of our extraterrestrials is unlikely to tell us much of importance

Argument from Personal Incredulity

This argument is a very weak one. It relies for its power entirely on disbelief and/or ignorance. Because an event, fact, theory or statement seems to contradict common sense, then this apparent contradictory event, fact, theory or statement becomes incredible. So when Kathy Davis is used as a subject for genetic experimentation, it is disbelieved on the grounds that her medical history makes her a bad choice for such experimentation - it is "incredible", or "unlikely", or "hard to believe", or "improbable" that the aliens would choose her as an example of medical robustness. Now, while this might be very sensible comment for us, it fails to satisfy the possible aims or motivations of the aliens themselves. For unknown intelligences may be especially interested in medical curiosities, and actively seek them out. We, after all, carry out similar experiments on infertile couples seeking to establish a family. But the point is that there is not a single objection that could be raised to the actions, motivations and behaviour of unknown intelligences that could not adequately be explained by ET proponents. I pointed this fact out over ten years ago in the UFO literature.

But this deep flaw in the ET hypothesis is ignored by Psychosocialites, to be replaced by general incredulity. Spencer and Evans are perhaps the most frequent users of this argument from personal incredulity. I have every sympathy for their plight; it can be very exasperating trying to point out how unlikely it is that such medical "rejects" should be chosen for these experiments, but I'm afraid that incredulity cuts no ice in any argument, whether it defies common sense or goes against received wisdom. There are many people in the world, for example, who feel exactly the same way about the Theory of Relativity and Darwinian Evolution, but such appeals to personal incredulity just do not address the real issues.

Disproving the Impossible

Perhaps, more than any other aspect of the Psychosocial Hypothesis, its most remarkable feature is that it seeks to find an alternative interpretation of a physical impossibility: namely, the abduction of humans by aliens. Half of the

hypothesis consists in trying to refute an impossible claim. How can this be so? I have to admit, it is precisely this aspect of the theory that has puzzled me the most.

Now if one claims that an event is very unlikely, and that the claims for the event cannot seriously be entertained - that the laws of physics are confounded, the actions and behaviour of the aliens incomprehensible - then does it come about that one should spend any time and effort trying to prove its impossibility? If all the basic laws, theories and observations of the hard sciences appear contravened, and no other evidence has been detected in these disciplines, then why bother refuting the notion at all?

But I have an idea. The reason why so many books and articles have been written, and why so many pointless debates have sought to disprove the impossible, is that refuting a rival theory, no matter how absurd, illogical or fundamentally flawed that theory may be, constitutes, in the mind of the amateur theorist, an argument in favour of his own. That's the closest I can get to understanding the situation that exists in European ufology today - that nobody knows how to construct a theory, nor what such a theory demands by way of definitions, parameters or validation.

When criticising a rival theory by all means point out the flaws that might exist as the very basis of that theory - the suppositions, assumptions, errors in logic or reasoning, the lack of definitions, of tests of falsifiability - errors that invalidate it as a theory. But once you have done this, and its proponents still fail to take account of these faults, then for goodness sake, don't keep hitting your head against the brick wall. If they are not amenable to reasoned argument, then it is very unlikely that they will ever change their position. Psychoanalysis has been totally discredited by modern psychology, psychiatry and neurology, but the persistence of the species is due entirely to its believers' refusal to accept the damning evidence - falsification of Freudian and Jungian theories has had no effect on their beliefs. We shall just have to wait for the survivors to die out - they will never change.

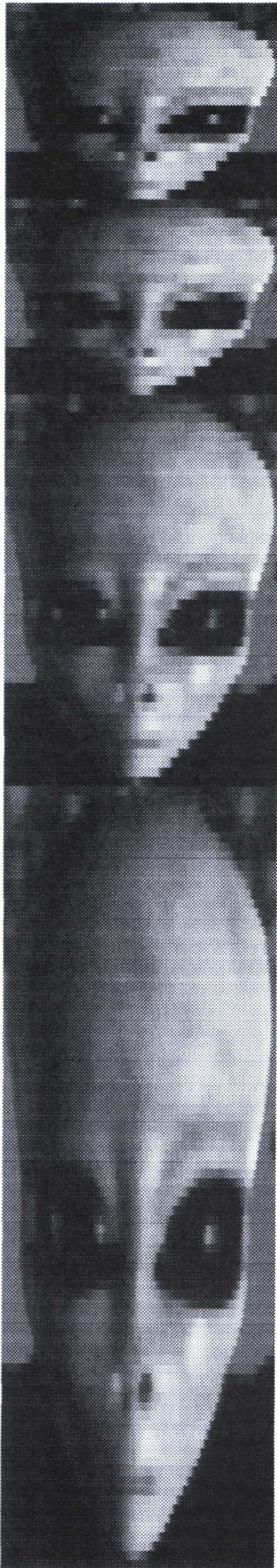
What you can and must do, though, is insist that their experiments be as rigorously de-

signed as possible - just like yours are. By all means point out errors in their methodology. What the investigators believe is irrelevant; what counts above all else are the results of their investigations - the reports or accounts. And so it is with the theorist - all that counts is the theory and its testing. Other investigators' political persuasions, their belief in their interpretations, their views and comments on individual cases, their religious persuasions, the colour of their socks - all this is absolutely irrelevant. Just concentrate on the reports and results - never take your eye off the ball - nothing else matters.

Interpretational Infinity

"I had not always been so enamored of science. In college I passed through a phase during which literary criticism struck me as the most thrilling of intellectual endeavors. Late one night, however, after too many cups of coffee, too many hours spent slogging through yet another interpretation of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, I had a crisis of faith. Very smart people had been arguing for decades over the meaning of *Ulysses*. But one of the messages of modern criticism, and of modern literature, was that all texts are 'ironic': they have multiple meanings, none of them definitive. *Oedipus Rex*, *The Inferno*, even the Bible are in a sense 'just kidding', not to be taken too literally. Arguments over meaning can never be resolved, since the only true meaning of a text is the text itself. Of course, this message applied to critics too. One was left with an infinite regress of interpretations, none of which represented the final word. But everyone still kept arguing! To what end? For each critic to be more clever, more interesting, than the rest? It all began to seem pointless." (John Horgan, *The End of Science*, 1996)

The ET Hypothesis is entirely based on interpretation of an anomalous event - which is not true of *Ulysses* or *Oedipus Rex*. This interpretation forms the abduction text. This text is then taken by both sides to be a claim for an impossible story. So the witness has the anomalous experience and, together with the abduction investigator, interprets this anomalous event as a true account of abduction by aliens. The opposition, meanwhile, looks at his claim for the impossible story, and



what do they do? They ignore the original event, and seek to disprove the existing interpretation. What is more, they seek to re-interpret the original interpretation. The original anomalous event is forgotten by both sides, so we end up with one side claiming that the interpretation of the event is true, while the other side seeks to disprove the impossible claim.

Like John Horgan's experience with *Ulysses*, interpretation follows interpretation, and none can claim to be definitive. But, unlike literature, the text of the original abduction narrative happens to contain hidden facts that reveal how the whole story came into being. But the interpreters are so busy interpreting that they fail to spot the meaningful information that the text contains - they take their eye off the ball, the original anomalous event. This is exactly what is happening between the ET school and the Psychosocial school: one has already come to an interpretation - the ETH - the second seeks to explain this interpretation by offering another interpretation for the impossible claim. Neither go back to the text to seek information that has no connection with the truth or falsity of the impossible claim!

One side simply accepts the basic impossible claim. The other side searches up and down for an off-the-shelf scenario that best fits the impossible claim. The Psychosocial off-the-shelf answer - Freudism/Jungism - bears absolutely no relation to the impossible claim, nor the hidden information. But the text of the original interpretation contains information just as significant as that described by Hufford in the Old Hag phenomenon. The new information is different, but just as significant. My findings complement Hufford's, they certainly don't contradict or conflict with them.

From Abuse of Terms to Terms of Abuse

The Psychosocial Hypothesis is riddled with linguistic abuses. These take the form of mistaking or confusing:

Motivation for Actions; Opinion and Incredulity for Probability; Wishes for Ability; Conscious intent for Subconscious; Interpretation for Fact; Purpose for Design; Need for Gain; Dissociation for Hypnosis; Identity for

Analogy; Criticism for Validation; Delusion for Phenomena.

This list is by no means exhaustive, but what many of the items have in common is that generalised colloquialisms are mistaken for precise definitions. Thus, hysteria is seen as a type of behaviour rather than a precise psychiatric diagnosis. Probabilities are expressed in terms of opinion. Analogy is taken as being "the same as". Need is defined by end results. Wishes are confused with actual ability and action.

Within the whole

Psychosocial Hypothesis there is not a single condition that carries a precise definition. And where a condition is mentioned (e.g., hysteria), its definition and its almost non-existence is either not known, or not investigated. No effort is ever made to write in anything other than generalities. For example, many terms used in the model have more than one meaning, but just as Humpty Dumpty says in *Through the Looking-Glass*, "When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean", and "when I make a word do a lot of work like that, I always pay it extra".

From abuse of terms emerges the terms of abuse. Thus, 'subconscious' carries the connotation of intentional deceit. 'Purpose' and 'need' also carry implications of ulterior motives. And when a few proponents of the hypothesis find that they cannot answer points in the argument, there is outright character assassination. This personal abuse most commonly takes the form of nasty, prurient and vicious innuendo in the Freudian mode. References are made to the fact that the witness is 'hysterical', or that their experience displays repressed sexual wishes, feelings, ideas or images. For example, nasal implants have significant sexual overtones, and that "a Freudian would have a field day with your account". This is a particularly revealing comment, for it shows that the person making such a statement is ignorant of the fact that Freud had to give up his career as a hospital anatomist due to his chronic cocaine addiction. He had studied the anaesthetic properties of the drug, but became addicted to it. His increasing addiction forced his departure from the hospital to try to find an occupation where he could work alone and so keep his

From abuse of terms emerge the terms of abuse; thus 'subconscious' carries the connotation of intentional deceit; 'purpose' and 'need' carry implications of ulterior motives

addiction secret. He underwent numerous attempts at corrective surgery on his nasal passages due to the damage caused by his continuous snorting of cocaine.

His nasty, prurient and aggressive behaviour towards his unfortunate patients and his growing prurient turn of mind coincides with his dependence on the drug. His particular brand of accusatory model of psychology fits perfectly the disturbed and meandering mind of the chronic drug addict. Now, I'm not saying all Psychosocial proponents behave like this, but when I read the scandalous excuse that the Psychosocial model cannot be tested against known abduction cases for fear of libel, then clearly character assassination forms a very nasty undercurrent to the model. One is deeply shocked to find such excuses in people claiming to be members of civilised society.

Summing Up

Now that it has been shown that the Extraterrestrial Hypothesis and the Psychosocial Hypothesis are fundamentally flawed, what can we say in retrospect to sum up their position within ufology and society? Well, the first is that the idea of extraterrestrials is not the product of the 20th, 19th or 18th centuries. The history of the idea reaches back to the Ancient Greeks. The subject has appeared in debate in virtually every century since Plato and Aristotle. Extraterrestrials have featured in some of the most heated arguments in religion, philosophy, cosmology, fiction and science. Some theologians have argued that God would not create countless other worlds to be left barren of life, for this denied His benevolence and omnipotence. Others have disagreed with this as it might displace Man as God's unique creation - Christ might have to undergo countless Redemptions on countless other worlds. This doubt concerning the

unique position of Man in God's Creation is expressed in the Psalm:

When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers,

The moon and the stars, which Thou has ordained,

What is man, that Thou art mindful of him,

And the Son of Man that Thou visitest him.

Authors, artists, poets, theologians, philosophers and scientists have found the idea of extraterrestrials an inspiration for their works, and many have made valuable contributions to the debate from both sides of the argument.

Scientists have used extraterrestrial ideas to increase public interest in astronomy, and employed them, as indeed NASA does to this day, as a way of persuading government bodies and institutions to fund astronomical research. Astronomers and other scientists used extraterrestrial ideas in their works as a way of interesting the general public in science. The volume of sales of such works is testament to the appeal that such ideas have on the minds of many. On Richard Proctor's death, *The Times* of 14 September 1888 said that he "had probably done more than any other man during the present century to promote an interest among the ordinary reading public in scientific subjects". While the American astronomer, C.A. Young declared: "As an expounder and populariser of science he stands, I think, unrivalled in English literature." Proctor wrote 57 books, mainly on astronomy, and over 500 essays, not including his 83 technical papers. Camille Flammarion was only more prolific in output: his *Merveilles celestes*, for example, sold over 60,000 copies, and his *Astronomie populaire* sold 100,000 copies within a few years - more than any other scientific work.

The foundation of many of the world's greatest astronomi-



cal observatories was directly due to the influence of astronomers using extraterrestrial ideas in their works. Proctor's assessment of such ideas influencing the popularity of astronomy is certainly true - speaking of his own use of the device in his own works, he said: "The interest with which astronomy is studied by many who care little for other sciences is due chiefly to the thoughts which celestial bodies suggest respecting life in other worlds." (Proctor, 1880)

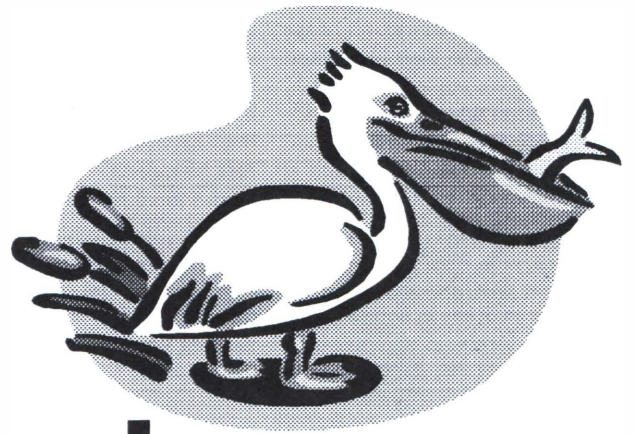
Despite the debacle of the Mars Canal controversy, which wasted untold man-hours of observation and ruined so many careers and friendships, the focus on the issue that this caused immensely benefited planetary astronomy as an area of study. The lessons learnt from over-reliance on instruments used to the very limit of their design capabilities, and the influence of preconceived ideas concerning extraterrestrial life on astronomical observation have paid dividends in assessing cosmological and astronomical theories. I find it not a little ironic that, in its own small way, the move by some ufologists to ban the use of hypnosis - one of the few tools available to ufologists as a means of studying some forms of amnesia in UFO and abduction cases - would be the equivalent of confiscating all the astronomical telescopes from the world's observatories after the Mars Canal fiasco!

From the list of contributors to the debate on extraterrestrial life it is clear that some of the finest minds have applied their thoughts to the problem. Their efforts, whether they ever turn out to be right or wrong, have greatly enriched the lives of many and their legacy is indeed an honourable one concerning a noble question. So when a witness undergoes an anomalous experience, or cannot identify an object in the sky, but interprets their experience in extraterrestrial terms, they have a

long and honourable tradition stretching behind them. That many sightings turn out to be mundane objects does not explain the mechanisms of misperception that might be operating. The niceties of sophistication of theory construction or of observational deduction are not widely known outside science, but this has more to do with the generally low standard of science education in our schools. One can hardly blame the witness for that.

For centuries rabbinical scholars have sought to find meaning in an impossible story. With each succeeding century rabbis have written interpretations of this story, and interpretations of those interpretations, and commentaries on interpretations. But after centuries of scholarly study, what is the sum total of the knowledge or truths gained? Absolutely nothing! They are still arguing. Hermeneutics has a perverse and insidious influence on civilisation for it distorts and perverts the truth. It appeals to the literati, the politicians and the media because its essence is that what you don't know by way of facts, you simply make up. This is then foisted onto the unsuspecting public as the truth. Psychobiographies, psychohistory, psychoart and psychopolitics are all ways of obtaining the Free Lunch at other peoples' expense.

The sceptics and Psychosocialites are the rabbinical scholars of the UFO world, and it is upsetting to see one's decent colleagues seduced by hermeneutics and waste so much time, effort and brain-power for so little result. The attitude of some sceptics in degrading and impugning the character of the average witness in ufology is a disgrace to the subject and of civilised behaviour to one's fellow man. The essence of the Psychosocial Hypothesis is of cheapening the witness's puzzling experience, and questioning their basic honesty as a human being. The hypothesis and some of its supporters tells us more about their own character and their ignorance of even the most basic facts of science than it ever tells us of the true nature of the UFO or abduction. Time: that arbiter between truth, ignorance or mere interpretational propaganda, will reveal who, in the UFO world, will be remembered for their contributions to our subject.



The Pelican writes...

THE UFO ABDUCTION enthusiasts are still flourishing, especially in the USA, and it has occurred to the Pelican to wonder just what they think they are doing. Do they regard themselves as psychotherapists, using abduction fantasies as a means to help people to discover what is really bothering them? Or do they believe that the Greys are real entities who beam down from physically real flying saucers? Whatever they believe, or say they believe, are they doing good or doing harm?

A number of abductionists profess to believe that the aliens are physically real, but the sensible way to evaluate professions of belief is to pay attention not to what people say but to what they do. Budd Hopkins, for example, is a nuts-and-bolts man. Therefore he says that the Greys are real physical creatures. He has to say this because he knows that if they are not physical then they must be psychological. The incidents he describes must be either real physical events or delusions, false memories and fantasies. If he admits that they are fantasies then there is nothing much left for him to do except to recommend his abductees to professional psychiatrists in the hope that they can trace the real causes of their worries and possibly cure them.

Not only does Hopkins apparently believe that the Greys are real but he also distances himself from the more wishy-washy abductionists by stating:

"Everything I have learned in twenty years of research into the UFO abduction phenome-

non leads me to conclude that the aliens' central purpose is not to teach us about taking better care of the environment. Instead, all of the evidence points to their being here to carry out a complex breeding experiment in which they seem to be working to create a hybrid species, a mix of human and alien characteristics." (1)

Can a person who believes anything so ridiculous reasonably be described as sane, muses the Pelican, as he gazes out at the pink elephants parading along the street and the purple pigs flying past his window?

Most ufologists assure us that Hopkins is perfectly sincere, so it is thus reasonable to assume that he means what he says. Although he distorts and misrepresents the views and actions of his opponents, we must assume that he is honestly mistaken or confused. For example, in his book *Witnessed*, he berates the "tiny band of debunkers" for revealing the real name of his star abductee, Linda Napolitano. (2) Now this is very odd because in this book there is a photograph and a drawing of Linda's apartment block and we are told it is near Brooklyn Bridge. We are also told that she has two sons and an Italian husband. Also, Linda has spoken at UFO conferences and had her picture printed in UFO magazines. Anyone who wanted to find out her real name and her address would obviously have no serious difficulty in doing so.

The Brooklyn Bridge abduction story is so complicated and so manifestly absurd that even some of Hopkins's collection of "abductees" declared it to be an obvious hoax or fantasy game. Their own stories were fantastic enough, but they are said to have thought that Linda was "going too far" and to have referred to her sarcastically as the "Queen Bee abductee". (3)

As Hopkins takes a nuts-and-bolts approach to the abduction stories, he has difficulty in defending himself from sceptics. He cannot provide any convincing evidence that abductions are not capable of being explained as a psychological and social phenomenon, so he attacks his critics by describing them as "fanatics" (4) or "self-appointed debunkers". (5)

His loathing of Philip Klass is well known. This is be-

cause Klass tends to ask awkward questions which seek to determine what Hopkins really believes about abductions, as distinct from what he says he believes. When Klass asked him, on a TV show, if he had reported the alleged abductions he was talking about to the FBI, he replied: "That is the most absurd thing I've ever heard in my life." (6) There was another notable occasion on which Hopkins was involved in a challenge concerning the FBI. This occurred at a meeting which Hopkins had arranged at his home to answer criticisms of Linda Napolitano and his handling of the Brooklyn Bridge abduction case. Among the critics present was Joe Stefula. Linda, her husband and two sons were present, supported by Jerome Clark, Walt Andrus, David Jacobs, Penelope Franklin, and the psychologist Gibbs Williams.

According to Jim Schnabel: "Stefula noted that Linda refused to report Dan and Richard, who had kidnapped her - and, in Dan's case, had apparently attempted to murder her - to the FBI or other law enforcement agencies. Linda said she would testify against them, but didn't want to press charges. Hopkins, Andrus and Clark backed her up. Involving the government in such a sensitive case, they argued, would only complicate things unnecessarily." (7)

Of course, the unnecessary complications would arise when the FBI or the police found there was no evidence to support Linda's absurd stories about Richard and Dan, or about abductions by aliens. The daylight of reality must never be allowed to shine on the carefully nurtured fantasies of the abduction enthusiasts, because they would then disappear as surely as a child's nightmare monsters disappear when mummy comes in and switches the light on.

There is no need for the Pelican to describe the quite disgusting abduction fantasies about which the likes of Hopkins and Jacobs speak and write with such evident relish; they are only too well known. The question of whether or not the abduction investigators are sincere and well-intentioned is irrelevant. Their activities and methods, particularly the use of hypnotic regression, are plainly harmful. Mark Pendergrast, in his excellent investigation of

false memories of incest and Satanic ritual abuse, remarks:

"I am sure that David Jacobs and John Mack feel real empathy for these people, who truly believe that they have been taken to UFOs and forcibly subjected to bizarre sexual experimentation. But their findings seem only to confirm what is already known about hypnotism - that subjects tend to "remember" whatever the hypnotist is looking for. The pain is real - regardless of whether the memories are of past lives, UFO abductions, or incest by parents - but it was usually prompted and encouraged through the dubious means of hypnotic "regression". Investigators such as Jacobs and Mack dupe themselves and others because they genuinely want to help people, especially if, in the process, they can feel that they are also exploring uncharted territory." (8)

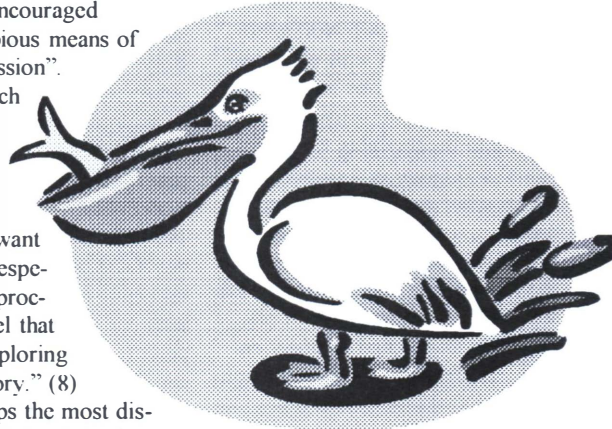
Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the abduction business is that some enthusiasts do not confine their attentions to adults. Philip Klass said that CSICOP chairman Paul Kurtz had phoned him, in 1987, to express "his serious concern for the public's peace of mind because of UFO-abduction fears generated by Strieber's and Hopkins's book promotion campaigns on television and other news media. He was especially concerned because of Hopkins's claim that UFO-nauts abduct young children and perform surgical experiments on them". (9)

Hopkins has been much criticised recently for involving children in the investigation of alleged abductions (although apparently he doesn't go so far as to hypnotise them). Several persons who believe that they themselves have been abducted have protested vigorously about this, but to no avail. Apparently he is still at it. Note the sycophantic words of Nick Pope, reporting on Hopkins's lecture at a recent UFO conference (which had more than the usual quota of raving lunatics among its speakers):

"An interesting feature of Budd's presentation was a series of drawings from children, which seemed to show images from classic abduction scenarios.

Research involving children who may be abductees is always going to be controversial, but Budd Hopkins personifies the ethical approach to abduction research and never puts his desire to gather data above his desire to help the abductee. The innocent simplicity in the testimony and drawings of these children is undeniably poignant, and is an area of abduction research that deserves closer scrutiny." (10)

Ugh! Can nothing be done to put a stop to all this disgusting nonsense and psychological child abuse?



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Readers' Letters

Dear John Rimmer,
Peter Rogerson's assessment of the Scole Report (*Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, Vol. 58, Pt. 220) in your June issue certainly merits an award from the Society for the Suppression of Evidence of the Paranormal and the Promotion of Bigotry which in the USA goes under the acronym of CSICOP.

He finds damning evidence for fraud in our 250 page-long report on the activities and physical phenomena produced during our two years-long examination by a small Group located in the Norfolk village of Scole.

Strange. No-one else has. Even the three senior members of the SPR whose detailed critiques Rogerson describes as quietly demolishing claims of genuineness admit that they can find no evidence of fraud. Nor have the scores of people who attended sittings with the Scole Group in Norfolk, California, Switzerland, Spain, Germany or Ireland. None has provided the slightest evidence of the massive and consistent faking which would have been required to produce a mere tithe of the phenomena we have carefully described and analysed. Rogerson contemptuously dismisses all these people as credulous, just as he ignores the detailed refutation in the authors' lengthy riposte to every one of the principal criticisms advanced.

What Rogerson and others have interpreted as evidence of fraud is in every case an inference. Thus the existence of what appear to be signs of human fabrication in a particular film strip is considered damning - by those who have been unable to state where, why and in what way a spirit-created film must differ from one made by human ingenuity. Similarly, the fact that a set of pictures of alchemical symbols appears to have been copied from a single book (itself a compendium of copies of earlier collections of such symbols, of course) is by some convoluted reasoning considered an in-

escapable hallmark of fraud, even though the conditions in which it was produced would have made deception almost if not completely impossible.

In case any of your readers suspect that Rogerson's assessment is objective, let me select just a few examples to illustrate his bias. At the SPR's crowded public study day debate on the Report last December, James Webster, a professional illusionist, firmly concluded that the phenomena he experienced during his three visits to the Group could not have been accomplished without elaborate machinery, of which there was no sign. Professor Fontana described in detail one of the 30-plus different displays of lights we witnessed: in the dark, a small light appeared and attached itself to a two-inch long crystal sitting immediately in front of me on a circular table. The light irradiated through the crystal, which was then raised up by unknown means and deposited in a translucent kitchen bowl where it could be clearly seen by the three principal investigators to be glowing. Professor Ellison, his face clearly visible from the glow, was invited to pick it up, then return it to the bowl, which he did, satisfying himself that there was no attachment or filament. He was then asked to repeat the process, only to find that while the appearance or essence of the crystal was there, clearly visible to all, its substance had dematerialised. Ellison's head was close enough to the bowl to prevent the intrusion of any hand or instrument. At our request the entire process was repeated for me, sitting alongside Ellison, and then for Professor Fontana.

None of our critics, and certainly not Rogerson, has made any attempt to suggest any way in which this could have been effected. Even the notion that the intelligently operated lights could have been manipulated by some sort of rod has been refuted not only by the gymnastic displays of the light phenomena themselves,

but by the experience of (among others) Professor Ivor Grattan-Guinness, who cupped his hands horizontally over the light spot and felt it buzzing around inside.

But if it is considered that we must all have imagined these and many other phenomena for which no-one has yet advanced a sensible explanation, what of the experience of Walter Schnittger, a senior engineering consultant who had several sittings with the Group? He took immense care to ensure that none of them could come into contact with a roll of 35 mm film which he bought and placed, still in its unopened container, into a small wooden box. This he padlocked and held in his hand throughout so that no side was accessible to interference. No illusionist on earth could allow a trick to be conducted entirely by a critical investigator using material bought and retained by him and equipment wholly under his control. Yet there were meaningful images developed immediately afterwards by Schnittger, as indeed there were when I conducted a comparable experiment in Ibiza.

What does Rogerson say about this? Nothing, of course. Nor have any of our critics.

Or take the experience of Dr Hans Schaer, who had a dozen sittings with the Group in three different countries, and hence in locations where there was no possibility of a confederate or of rigging the seance room or importing specialist equipment. At the SPR study day I demonstrated the absurdity of any suggestion that the video clip which produced a short film could have been the subject of a switch by the Group, since Schaer had throughout the experiment total control of the video tape and the video camera, and in reasonably good light too. Again, the critics prefer to ignore this, leaving readers with the implication that we must all have been liars in cahoots with a band of frauds, not merely credulous victims of senile gullibility.

Lest anyone imagines



that physical fakery was the mainstay of the Group, it is worth noting that one of the communicators, speaking to twenty unknown sitters through the entranced medium Diana in the alien surroundings of a Los Angeles garage, gave very precise and readily recognisable details of a recently deceased young man. At another seance there, George Dalzell was given unprompted information about himself and the circumstances in which a close friend had recently died. So impressed was he with the accuracy of this evidence and the confirmation he subsequently obtained from the friend's parents, that he flew over for the Kensington Study Day at his own expense to testify to the genuineness of the Group. He brought with him similar statements from other participants.

To what level of arrogance must Rogerson have ascended in order to dismiss all such evidence, and all these witnesses? The question is rhetorical. He adopts the standards and embraces the mores of the 17th-century Roman Church in dismissing as fantastic and dangerous the heretical notion of heliocentricity. He implicitly declines, as have our three principal critics, to adopt the bundle-of-sticks or Bayesian approach in which all the evidence must be taken together. He relies heavily on ad hominem smears while evading the challenges of large chunks of evidence and even bigger chunks of analytical arguments which show how formidable the obstacles to deception must have been, and what improbable assumptions must be made to bolster the hollow fraud hypothesis towards which Rogerson's prejudices impel him.

The only merit in his review is that it appears in a Journal whose Editor is willing to publish vigorous, and perhaps unpalatable responses - in contrast to your Web Editor Mark Pilkington's other outlet, *Fortean Times*, which has seriously mutilated the replies to Pilkington's critical re-

views. I trust the same fate does not await this comment. Yours sincerely, Montague Keen, Sudbury, Suffolk

Dear John,
Grateful as I and my fellow authors are for Peter Rogerson's review of *The UFOs That Never Were* (Magonia 71) I'd like to be a bit picky if I may.

Peter suggests that Dave Clarke and myself "appear rather baffled" as to our true belief about the Alex Birch film. Not so, we are both quite convinced the photograph is a hoax. No question about that. But we did try to structure that chapter to make the reader unsure as to what the solution was. We tried to make the reader think, something most UFO books fail to do.

Peter also suggests that "many of the cases in the book were intrinsically weak". That's an arguable point. We chose the cases because they represented "classic" British UFO cases which have had an impact both on the subject, ufologists and the general public via the media. In short they were "big" cases. The cases were also chosen because they all had more evidence than the usual UFO case. The cases in *TUTNW* were either multiple witness accounts and/or photographic or film cases.

Unlike the majority of UFO cases there was something there to investigate. This is why we left CEIII and CE IV cases out of it - all we could have done with cases of this type is to offer circumstantial evidence and opinion rather than hard fact.

Yours, hacking away at the support timbers of ufology,
Andy Roberts
Clifton, Brighouse
West Yorkshire.

Dear John
One of the attractions of *Magonia* - a bit like *Private Eye* - is that you can usually tell the style of personalities and presentation that you'll get when you open the covers. Montague Keene is different

since he actually believes in something, by way of a change. I also enjoyed Gareth Medway's realisation that reason is a self-limiting system, but suspect that he's got a long way to go before he can wrap up Genesis 15:23. There was a venerable non-Augustinian tradition which understood this passage to refer to intermarriage between the pious sons of Seth and the impious daughters of Cain: not, admittedly, an obvious reading, but one which lets you off the hook of admitting the corporeality of angels. This continued to be a hot potato down to the days of *Paradise Lost*, and has obvious implications about the ability (or otherwise) of Greys to walk through walls, not to mention questions about the destination of the soul, ghosts, etc. How can Hamlet's father be seen there on the battlements, when *thereness* is a property of the physical universe, of which the late Hamlet Snr. is no longer a part? Search me, but there should be a monograph in that somewhere, if you can find a philosopher.

I can't help feeling that there is a bit more mileage to be got out of Victorian fairies than appears in David Sivier's study. Like many Magonians, he has a tendency to sum up western culture in sweeping statements that seem more appropriate to the Recording Angel than a mere social historian. Such as: 'Factories and mills sprang up embodying the new scientism and rationalism of the age.' When were these factories built (or 'sprung') and where and by whom? Who thought they embodied scientism - the architect, the client, the people who bought their products, or the people who made them? And what did all these different people think about fairies? Some workers, such as Cornish tin miners had their belief in the fairy world strengthened by industrialism. Others, such as East Anglian farm labourers, didn't believe in fairies and didn't industrialise either. In Glamorgan fairies disappeared together with the rural

landscape. It is all very complicated. 'The Victorians' is shorthand for a lot of different people in addition to John Millais and Andrew Lang.

Surveys like Roger Simpson's *Camelot Regained* (1990) suggest that it was the 1820's when fairyland caught on as a powerful image for readers and theatregoers of all classes - although these fairies come from a background of chapbooks and romance, rather than local legends. They were certainly nothing to do with personal encounters - unlike ghosts. And it is a little puzzling to see them as a reaction against 'industrialisation and mechanisation'. 1820s England was a country in which nothing moved faster than a horse, and most motive power came from rivers.

Certainly fairyland was contrasted in contemporary literature with modernity, but modern meant the Reform Bill rather than *Metropolis*. 'Old English agrarian traditions' can hardly have been withering at a time which saw unprecedented rural population growth: beside, local fairy folklore - which by 1800 was confined to limited parts of the country - was sustained by the economic support which cities gave to their rural hinterland. From Pixies' Cave in the industrialised Mendips, you could have looked down and watched Bristol being burnt by the radical mob of 1831.

I could go on, but the aim is not to overturn David Sivier's interpretation of events, just to suggest that concepts such as 'the new industrial bourgeoisie', or even 'the carnage of the First World War' are not self-evident phenomenon. They are constructions put together after the event: constructions which often need explaining in themselves, rather than forming a quick and easy way of explaining everything else.

Best Wishes
Jeremy Harte, Ewell, Surrey

Book Reviews



Chris A Rutkowski. *Abductions and Aliens: what's really going on*. Dundurn Press, 1999. £9.99, pbk.

Canada's premier ufologist has written a well balanced and useful study of the abduction claims based on his own experiences and researches. He presents the stories of many of the abductees and contactees he has encountered. These demonstrate two things vividly: the wide disparity among abduction claims and the extent to which abduction stories merge into other forms supernatural encounter narratives such as spirit possession and ghost stories. While many of the stories presented by Rutkowski have some classical abduction features, many also have considerable overlaps with earlier contactee stories. Many are told by people who have a strong sense of personal mission.

This experience leads Rutkowski to reject both simplistic ends of the spectrum: one which interprets all abductees as delusional, the other which argues they are all perfectly normal.

Rutkowski generally leans towards a general psycho-social interpretation: for some reason, certain

people appear to *think* they have been contacted by aliens. This could be because of various contributing factors: "dissatisfaction with life, stress, domestic.. (or) family problems, peer pressure, rape trauma, chemical imbalances or child abuse. Perhaps any one of these or any combination of them." (Though he adds "it is even possible that aliens are doing some kidnappings, but that's another matter." I suspect that was meant a humorous aside). He is deeply critical of the ability of ufologists to act as amateur therapists and suggests that abductees should be assessed by professional psychologists or psychiatrists.

I think a caution should be entered here, I am not sure that these 'professional psychologists

or psychiatrists' would be much help unless they were experts in sleep disorders. Looking through many of Rutkowski's cases, we see many which are clearly the product of sleep paralysis episodes, hypnagogic hallucinations, false awakenings, unusually vivid dreams and the like. One example is 'Louis' who had a long history of sleep paralysis episodes, and also had hypnagogic images of alien heads. Rutkowski gets Louis to see a clinical psychologist but it seems unclear as to whether this psychologist was really aware of sleep paralysis, even though it is obvious that this was the cause of Louis' anxiety. Instead he seemed to be taking him down the path of his life history, looking for traumatic causes of anxiety. Though Rutkowski mentions sleep paralysis in passing, (wrongly connecting



Chris Rutkowski

it to night terrors, something else entirely) he doesn't seem to have taken on board its central role, or its essentially non-pathological character.

Of course some of the people whose stories Rutkowski tells have far more serious problems, and he may be the first ufologist to be honest enough to admit that a significant percentage of

abductees (20%?) are at least borderline delusional (although this has earned him a drubbing on Internet discussion forums). Whether these people are indeed schizophrenic or perhaps have extreme forms of phantasia is unclear. One case involved a depressed young woman who became a contactee for greys, and was persecuted by other types of alien. Both types could only be seen by herself, and she believed they were giving her special powers. Rutkowski rightly connects her experiences with that of the probably schizophrenic 'Barbara O'Brien'. But this is also an old cultural motif - the psychological crisis of the shaman, and similar narratives of distressed women granted special powers by familiars and spirit beings, which ap-

pear in the witchcraft trials. In more recent times this young lady may have become a spiritualist medium.

I have to correct one mistake that Rutkowski makes, where he says that I had said that abductees may be "psychological disturbed people, often victims of satanic cults and child abuse". Readers of *Magonia* will know that I most emphatically do *not* believe *anyone* has been the victim of a satanic cult, because that creature just doesn't exist. Rather I was arguing that both abduction memories and satanic abuse memories were fantasies, and those who had these tales may have had Munchausen's syndrome and/or MPD. However things move on, and there is a growing consensus that MPD is, itself, largely an artefact of the therapists. Best guess from this non-expert is that both 'high hypnotisability' and 'MPD' are connected with enhanced abilities to take on roles given the right social cues. There is nothing fundamentally different in this from an actor getting wholly immersed in a role while playing it.

An interesting side issue in the book, is Rutkowski's critique of Persinger, whose views have been rather uncritically endorsed. Rutkowski points out just how vague some of his claims are, and that for example the catalogues on which he establishes his correlations are filled with very ordinary IFOs, and that the odd feeling produced during his experiments with his magic helmet may be largely due to suggestion. Sceptics as much as believers have a tendency to lower their critical guard when confronted by those who seem to be saying something that we want to hear. This is altogether an important and useful book.

Jonathan Downes. *The Black-down Mystery: a tale of UFOs, crash retrievals and high strangeness*. Goblin University Press/Centre for Fortean Zoology, 2000. £7.50.

I think that Jonathan Downes must be engaged in some sort of sinister conspiracy, first he produces one of the most outrageously funny books on ufology ever; the one that tells you what gutter roots ufology is really like, so that you will persevere in reading the book against all odds. Then makes the

print so damned small that you are going to get a stinking headache reading it, if not actually making yourself blind. Destroying the eyesight of the world's ufologists, so they can't see what's going on under their noses, that's what its all about matey. Well we've rumbled your little plot there.

On balance it really is worth investing in a good magnifying glass and following this hilarious adventure of Jonathan Downes and two equally weird mates as they explore the word of small town ufology, trying to discover the secret of a tale of a crashed plane and a UFO. Their encounter with a thirty-something ufologist and her aged mother on a Bridgewater council estate will make your eyes water, even if the print doesn't. It might also make you give up ufology before something like that happens to you. This should be made into a TV sitcom. Any suggestions as to who should play Nick Redfern?

Dennis Stacy and Patrick Huyghe. *The Field Guide to UFOs: a classification of various unidentified aerial phenomena based upon eyewitness accounts. Illustrated by Harry Trumbore. Quill (HarperCollins), 2000. £12.50, pbk.*

The latest in this field guide series presents accounts, with drawings of selected UFO reports, both well and little known, to illustrate the various shapes of UFO. Even within the broad band of each general category, there are wide divergences, and I am not sure that trying to classify such a vague collection as UFO reports into shapes achieves much. After all the majority if not all of even these selected reports are going to turn out to be IFOs of one kind or another. Stacy and Huyghe admit this in the introductory and concluding text, but in the actual case reports they just put one line sceptics solutions, and for some of the cases which they suggest no one

has put forward a sceptical solution, they indeed have (for example sceptics solutions for Socorro have included a hot air balloon, prototype lunar lander, plasma, and a hoax by Zamorra and the local mayor; for the Linke case (which should be dated 1950 - it occurred well before the actual report) these would include secret Russian aircraft, hoax by Linke, hoax by journalists, for is there any evidence that such a person as Oscar Linke actually existed; for the cloud cigars, well, clouds, possibly pre-tornado cloud formations, or possibly the moon seen through obscuring haze.

S and H make some interesting points, one is the decline of the traditional UFO investigation report that was once the pillar of your average UFO mag. People actually went out and investigated UFO reports. Now the mags are filled with pages of uninvestigated stories, often about abductions, and pages of nonsense about

Roswell. That is I assume the situation in the States. In the UK people seem to investigate UFO reports, but have reverted to not publishing the results of the investigation in detail.

In the end, they conclude that a tiny proportion of UFO reports may well be generated by an 'alien' but not necessarily extra-terrestrial technology, though they point out the real problems with this (why should spaceships or something more exotic behave like ultra high performance aircraft, complete with aircraft type lights). Sceptics will point out that some very impressive UFO reports have turned out to be IFOs, and that we should be especially cautious about explanations involving non-human intelligences.

A major reason for this, apart from the obvious ones, is that there is a natural human tendency to ascribe the events and phenomena of the world to the actions of personal agencies (tradi-

Tana Dineen. *Manufacturing Victims: what the psychology industry is doing to people. Constable, 1999. £14.99.*

Are the various strange therapies that we encounter in *Magonia*, the past-life regressions, the spirit-releasement therapy, the UFO abduction syndrome and the Satanic abuse myth, merely the result of the misapplication and misuse of otherwise solid and worthwhile techniques? Tana Dineen suggests they are not, rather they are the extreme examples of a fundamentally flawed doctrine, the psychologising of human experience and behaviour and the manufacturing of victims out of fundamentally healthy people.

She does not deny there are real victims in the world, but as she points out, the majority of 'real' victims, the victims of poverty, oppression, racism, or of vast cruelty are of little interest to the psychology industry, as they do not have the wherewithal to pay psychologists fees. The psychologists' ideal 'victims' are to a large extent the successful within society, the bored and vaguely unhappy bourgeoisie whose lives are not as happy and shiny as shown on the TV adverts, and who can be persuaded that the normal stresses, frustrations and failures, which are the lot of any human life, are 'traumas' or 'addictions' rendering them victims in need of a therapy; and which in effect declare them unfit

to run their own lives without the intervention of a 'professional'.

The medicalisation and pathologisation of normal human experience is often accomplished by using terms devised to describe extreme situations and using them to describe the trivial. Thus having your purse snatched, or being belittled by the boss become 'traumas' almost on a par with being held hostage and raped, or having your legs chopped off in a traffic accident.

More dramatically, vague senses of disquiet can be interpreted as 'symptoms' of some hidden and improbable victimising experience: a deep, dark, hidden secret to which the all-wise therapist has the only key. It is here are bred the wild therapies we have commented on so many times before in *Magonia*. Those who are most likely to become their prey are what Dineen calls psychologically-prone personalities whose features include: seeing the world in psychological terms, being emotionally pre-occupied and reactive,

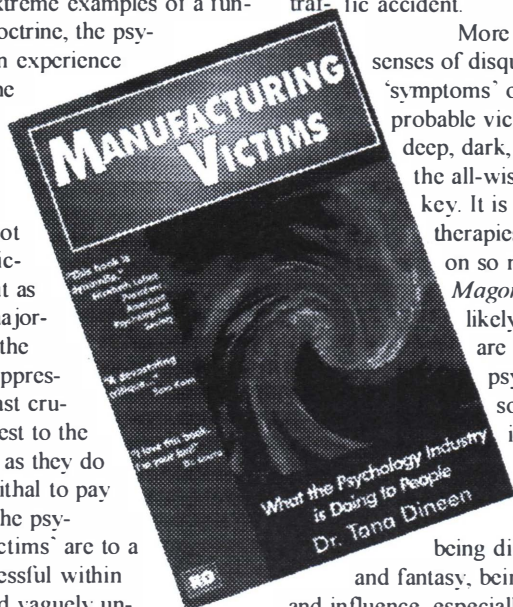
being disposed to imagination and fantasy, being open to suggestion and influence, especially from purported authority figures, seeing direction and guidance in living, wanting simple solutions and answers. These are very similar to the descriptions of fantasy prone personalities, or the highly hypnotisable personality. They also show some similarities to those who are drawn to 'cults' and other fringe religious and social

movements.

Dineen remarks on a study which noted a strong correlation between fantasy-prone personality and childhood sexual abuse, arguing that the former had emerged as a defence against the latter. An alternative reading she suggests would be that fantasy prone personalities are more open to suggestions from therapists that they suffered from childhood sexual abuse, and more able to 'remember' imaginary events.

Overall the psychology industry, she argues, belittles real victims, and denigrates human beings' often extraordinary ability to come through the most appalling situations. It reduces peoples capacity to organise and control their own lives, replaces a real concept of normality based on average human experience with an absurd ideal of psychological health which almost everyone will fail, and thus become a victim of some internal or external force from which only the psychologist can deliver us. Thus we are all seen as being 'vulnerable', in need of guidance or even guardianship. Like many totalitarian leaders, psychologists seek to undermine existing, authentic human relationships, and to replace real relationships, however flawed, with ones bought and paid for, a form of prostitution.

Like many polemicists, it is probable that Dineen exaggerates to some degree, and it is perhaps unfair to blame psychologists alone for the growth of the victim culture. Surely equal 'credit' must go to Rantzenite TV shows and the legions of ambulance chasing lawyers, who persuade people that if something goes wrong, someone else, preferably someone with cash, is to blame.



tionally gods, spirits, ghosts, witches etc). Though this had been to a degree culturally repressed in our society it remains just below the surface. Today, however we live in a world dominated by technology, therefore there is tendency to interpret things in mechanistic or technological terms. Linking these two together it is not surprising that we in the western world tend to interpret ambiguous experiences and perceptions in terms of the operation of a personal agency mediated through technology. Thus even if some UFO reports are produced by something very exotic indeed, it is unlikely that that *something* is an alien technology, and more likely to be something we currently have neither concepts nor vocabulary to describe.

Michael Lieb. *Children of Ezekiel: aliens, UFOs, the crisis of race and the advent of end time*. Duke University Press, 1998. £12.95, pbk.

In this difficult but, I suspect, important book, Michael Lieb traces the cultural heritage of the vision of Ezekiel, and the transmutation of that vision of the ineffable, into a revelation of technology; most particularly a sacred technology seen as an expression of the wrath of God. Whether envisioned as a chariot (as for example by John Milton who used the phrase Chariot of Paternal Deitie), as a man powered flying machine (as by the 18th century German inventor Melchior Bauer), a railway locomotive (as an anonymous pamphlet of 1843), or in terms of today's rockets and space ships, the vision is revisioned in terms of the powerful technology of the time, divine power thus being equated with technological power.

Lieb traces the rise of the ancient astronaut theories, and their apotheosis, at least in terms of Ezekiel, in Josef Blumrichs *The Spaceships of Ezekiel*, where the vision becomes wholly reduced to 'nothing but' a sort of rocket ship, or perhaps the rocket as manifestation of overwhelming otherness and power. Lieb places the general UFO mythology within this context, and one can think of parallels he does not draw, the Cash-Landrum story for example evokes the idea of the heavens opening and revealing an overwhelming brilliance, like the 'hashmal' of Ezekiel, which the Rabbis argued

was a terrible danger to the uninitiated (Lieb notes that this mysterious world suggesting brilliance, and translated as amber in the Authorised version, is used in modern Hebrew to mean electricity). There are also echoes of Ezekiel in the hypnotic visions of Betty Andreasson. Lieb also notes the sceptical revisionings of Ezekiel's visions, either as a schizophrenic hallucination, or as suggested by Donald Menzel, a sun dog (other writers have interpreted it in terms of a tornado or of ball lightning).

The technologisation of the divine is also expressed in the development of atomic weapons, and the growth of atomic apocalypticism in the United States, where it has merged with other passages in Ezekiel concerning the dark forces from the north, to become the central theme of modern dispensationalist fundamentalism. In the discussions of this we see how close Ronald Reagan was to 'mad' apocalyptic cult leaders, seeing himself as a prophet of the end times.

As the major case study of the use of UFO interpretations of Ezekiel's vision in an apocalyptic context, Lieb chooses the Nation of Islam, and their theology of the 'Mother Plane' openly linked in their writings to Ezekiel's vision, as the agent of destruction and redemption, and their incorporation of scientific imagery in their theology (For example their Satan figure, Yakob, is a 'mad scientist' out of 1930's popular culture, with echoes of Well's Dr Moreau. This is the context in which Louis Farrakhan proclaims himself an abductee and contactee.



Toby Smith. *Little Gray Men: Roswell and the rise of a popular culture*. University of New Mexico Press, 2000. £19.99, Journalist

Toby Smith looks at Roswell and its exploitation of the crashed UFO story in the context of the American popular culture of space travel and science fiction, using as springboards the associations with the town of Robert Goddard the rocket pioneer, and science fiction writer Jack Williamson. There are

Leonard G. Cramp. *The Cosmic Matrix: piece for a jigsaw part two - anti gravity, starships and unlimited clean energy*. Adventures Unlimited Press, 1999. £11.99, pbk.

Every so often the murky waters of Loch Ufology are disturbed as there arises from unhallowed, truly coelocanthic depths, some prehistoric survivor, believed extinct aeons ago. Such is this book by Leonard Cramp who, if you have asked me, I would have guessed had died about twenty years ago. No, old ufologists don't die, they just find loony publishers to produce their books.

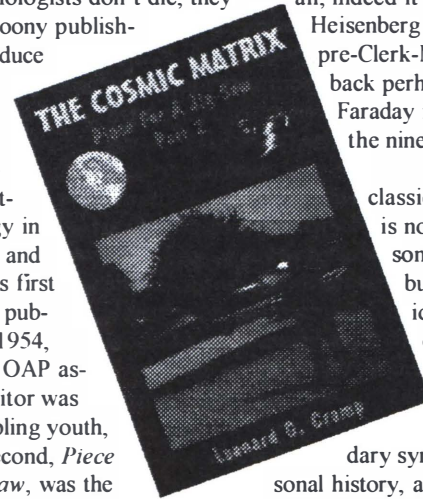
Cramp was a figure in British ufology in the 1950s and 1960s. His first book was published in 1954, when our OAP associate editor was but a stripling youth, and his second, *Piece for a Jigsaw*, was the subject of a critical review in our own prehistoric predecessor, *MUFORG Bulletin*, back in 1966, by our then science editor Alan Sharp. Cramp was also the centre of a huge row in BUFORA that year, in which members of the Cambridge University UFO group tried to have him removed as vice-president of the association for his 'pseudo scientific anti gravity flying saucer propulsion theories'. This led to the members of CUGIUFO to be denounced as 'white-coated young godlings of

the laboratory' by BUFORA officials, choosing cranks over scientists.

To call this book pseudoscience would be gratuitously insulting - to the majority of pseudoscientists that is, for most pseudoscientists try to sound like modern scientists, and liberally (mis)quote relativity and quantum mechanics. Cramp does nothing of the sort, his physics, the 'Unity of Creation Theory' of Anthony Avenal bears no relationship to modern (i.e. 20th century) science at all, indeed it is not just pre-Heisenberg or Einstein, it is pre-Clerk-Maxwell, harping back perhaps to Michael Faraday in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Cramp is a classical crank, in that he is not the pioneer of some radical new idea, but the proponent of ideas long abandoned by the scientific mainstream. There are the usual secondary symptoms, the personal history, almost taking pride in lack of scientific education, the constant refrain that soon the hard cruel world will have to listen to him, the idea that because he cannot understand the mathematical complexities of modern science it must be wrong, right down to such minor, but telling, symptoms such as quoting from Jeans and Eddington.

Lovers of nostalgia will be delighted to see that Cramp is still persisting with his orthogonal projections of the Adamski and Derbyshire photographs.



portraits of the town, and of the UFO convention held there in 1997. One revealing snippet puts paid to Glen Dennis's claim that he was threatened by a black army sergeant in 1947, was that the town was then deeply segregated and racist (one bar had a sign saying 'dogs and niggers eat at the rear') Smith seeks to place the legend in the wider context of UFO mythology, but perhaps does not have quite a wide enough reading in the subject to quite pull it off.

Where this book scores, is not so much in facts, but in evoking an atmosphere of a past

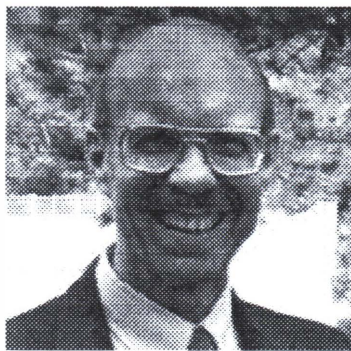
epoch, the middle America of the 1940s and 1950s, and in presenting Roswell as a real place, and not just a sort of vague backdrop for the UFO stories, and the multiple associations of the town. There are also interesting discussions of the interplay between the 'real' UFO stories and developing folklore, and the images in the movies, noting for example the central role of *The Day the Earth Stood Still* in developing a number of UFO mythologies from the contactees to the 'great Washington flap' and the stories of Frank Scully in constructing parts of the Roswell and wider UFO legends.

R Leo Sprinkle: *Soul Samples: personal explorations in reincarnation and UFO experiences.*

Granite Publishing, 1999.

\$23.99, pbk.

Have you ever met anyone, say in a pub or at a party, who proceeds to simultaneously bore and embarrass you, by telling you more about their life history than you could ever want to know? Something of that feeling is generated by this book, which is a curious mixture of autobiography, curriculum vitae, and a jumble of the author's old papers. But it is an autobiography which at ones tells you too much about the author's battles with colleagues and minutiae of college life, yet in the end tells you very little about his real life. Perhaps it resembles, in this way, the religious biographies of a past time, all concerned with the subject's inner life and soul, and little concerned about his active life. For Sprinkle, the religion is the 'New Age', and the Leo Sprinkle who emerges from these pages is not so much a psychologist with a few strange ideas at the periphery, but a New Ager who has long abandoned any connection with mainstream psychology, and who, it is painfully clear, was an acute embarrassment to the University where he was head of counselling; not least because he was bringing all this extracurricular stuff into his work.



At the end of all the minutiae of committee wrangling and reproductions of old papers, one never real feels that one understands why Sprinkle became involved in the new age movement, or why he so completely abandoned his critical faculties. He refers to odd personal experiences and childhood nightmares, and to his strict, almost abusive upbringing, but many other people must have had similar backgrounds without going to completely overboard.

Alan Baker. *Invisible Eagle: the history of Nazi occultism.*

Virgin, 2000. £20.00.

Baker sets out in this book to examine the myths of Nazi occult involvement, and the myths of the Nazi survival conspiracy. Much of the book is eminently sensible, sceptical and good as far as it goes. In the early part of the book where he is guided by the work of real historians such as Nicholas Goodrich-Clarke he is reasonably sure footed, exposing the many myths which have grown around the subject, though the treatment is not original. In the second half, where he deals with the myths of the Nazi survival, UFOs and Antarctic bases, the footing is less sure. The problem is that he appears to have done very little actual research himself, and while he produces a range of interesting information, a glance at the notes shows that this is largely borrowed from a few other writers.

This is not so bad when he is quoting reliable sources, but when, for example in his section on the hollow earth, he quotes liberally from David Hatcher Childress, a guy who gives the impression that he thinks he is the reincarnation of Indiana Jones, and who publishes all sorts of wild 'free energy' and conspiracy stuff, one has doubts. In his chapter on the Nazi saucer myth, this reliance leads him to take at face value the fictitious 'biography' of Renato Vesco. Kevin McClure, has done research on this subject and found the situation to be very different.

The main popularisers of the notion of 'Nazi occultism' were the writers Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier in their books *The Dawn of Magic* and *Morning of the Magicians*, and it is perhaps not a coincidence that Pauwels later went to be a significant figure in the neo-Pagan wing of the French radical right. The main import of such views has been to glamorise the squalid totalitarian state that was National Socialism, as well as to provide the comforting message that the Nazi crimes were something radically alien from the human mainstream, which 'couldn't happen here'. The lessons of human history, alas, do not bear that out.

Sarah Burton. *Impostors: six kinds of liar.*

Viking, 2000. £15.99.

Sarah Burton examines the careers of a variety of impostors; those who have created fictitious identities and lives for themselves, or have appropriated the identities of other people, usually, but not always, dead. They include Franziska Schankowska, a Polish peasant girl, who turned herself into Anna Andersen, alias Princess Anastasia of Russia, Arthur Orton who took on the identity of Roger Tichborne, Archie Delaney who began Grey Owl, the American Indian, Mary Baker Wilcocks who became Princess Caraboo, and Ferdinand Waldo Demara who took on a whole plethora of roles: monk, priest, high school teacher, naval surgeon, psychologist and prison warder. A special subset are the women who became male impersonators, in order to enter all-male preserves.

Excluding the latter as special cases, there are many underlying similarities. The lives created are often dramatic ones, the stuff of romance. Henri Grin, for example, made his assumed identity, the 'white man whom the aboriginals made a god', a popular literary motif of his time. Mary Baker constructed a whole new language and invented a way of life and narrative which suited the Georgian taste for the exotic. Sarah Burton suggests that one common characteristic is a prodigious memory; another seems to be status inconsistency, many were actually extremely intelligent people, trapped by background and class into low grade occupations and dead-end lives. Burton points out that many of them had actually done well in their assumed lives, and given the right background and chances in life they could have excelled. She also argues that few have done real harm and some have done positive good. It is hard not to think of Demara, for example, as an archetypal trickster figure, at one level an amoral crook, yet at another bringing light and hope into dark and shattered lives, whether as an inspirational school teacher, or a prison guard bringing real care for the first time to some of the most desperate offenders.

Where is book falters is in trying to grasp the motivations of these people. She recognises that money is often not the main force behind their actions. Are they indeed calculated deceivers, or are they swept up in their fantasies?

As Magonia readers may recall, I have argued that these sorts of narratives might represent a component or aspect of fantasy proneness, which I have called Caraboo syndrome. Baker seems to have had a background in telling wild tales, and when confronted with her real identity constructed another great adventure story involving her life among the lowlife of London which would have done justice to Feilding or Defoe. Demara talked of his compulsions to take on new roles. Grin's story showed great imaginative flair. Might they not, at least while telling these stories, have believed them? This imposture might then represent one facet of a more general pseudologia fantastica, the overwhelming impulse to create dramatic situations for oneself and to become a sort of living novel.

A number of other interesting points might be made, for example comparing Baker's adventures and glossolalia, with those of 'Helene Smith' and her Martian adventures and language, or to ask what is the relationship between this 'imposture' and the much-touted 'multiple personalities', or for that matter reincarnation, alien identity or 'vampire identity' narratives.

We may also wonder if any of these people showed the second major component of full blown fantasy proneness, phantasia, the production of internal imagery of hallucinatory intensity (as portrayed by the TV character Ally McBeal for example). Helene Smith certainly did. If others did, and therefore in some sense actually 'lived' and experienced these lives, rather than laboriously and consciously made them up, it would explain their power, and the convincing authenticity of their narratives which sweep up those they encounter.

The significance of all of this to the sorts of things we are examining in *Magonia* is, I hope, pretty obvious.

•• Peter and Elizabeth Fenwick. *Past Lives: an investigation into reincarnation memories*. Headline, 1999. £17.99

•• Tom Shroder. *Old Souls: the scientific evidence for past lives*. Simon and Schuster, 1999. £17.99.

In the first of the these books, Peter Fenwick, a neuropsychiatrist, and his wife asses, not only the classic cases in the literature, but a data base of material collected as a result of an appeal in the *Daily Mail*, a newspaper, which for the benefit of our non-British readers I should explain, is a tabloid newspaper which in recent years has taken to intermingling its staple diet of reactionary politics and suburban golf-club bar-room prejudices, with a wide variety of New Age and paranormal claims. This data-base is really just a collection of anecdotes, and it is not clear what, if any, attempts were made to verify the claims made in the letters. Past experience suggests that some, at least, of the respondents to such newspaper appeals consider them as opportunities for creative writing.

In general the Fenwicks are quite reasonably open-minded in their discussions, and do not let their evident will to believe overrule their willingness to point out the obvious flaws in some of these cases. Indeed they produce perhaps one of the most critical assessments of the Jenny Cockell story I have seen, and are also not uncritical of Ian Stevenson and his work on birth marks, quoting a dermatologist who debunks the claim that birth marks migrate as people age (a theme which crops up several times in Stevenson's cases, presumably to explain why birth marks are not exactly where they should be).

The Fenwicks also point out the puzzling absence of language skills in these cases; people recount past lives in what appears to be either standard modern language, or in mock antique style reminiscent of poor quality historical romances. And that is what many of the stories, presented here read like. Westerners tend to come up with romantic stories from stock book and film situations which often recycle popular myths about the past (indeed it is surprising that any of us are here at all, given the popularity of murder, early death and

other dramas in these stories).

Some of the classic cases, such as Arthur Guidham's reincarnated Cathars, which the Fenwicks pretty well dismiss as a fraud, are indeed the veritable stuff of historical novels. The same goes for the wild historical romance told by Laurel Dilmont and her 'therapist' Linda Tarazi (an amateur hypnotist), of the adventures of a Spanish Lady. The Fenwicks seem puzzled by this case, though they admit it seems to just too good (and they could have added just too dramatic) to be true, yet contains lots of details difficult to find out. However, though the Fenwicks discuss a number of explanations, they omit the obvious one: that the story has come from a historical novel, and that someone else had done all the hard graft for Dilmont and Tarazi.

They tend to dismiss fraud on the grounds that it would involve an awful lot of hard work and research, but this is not true. To fake a good past life all that is involved is to go round charity shops and junk shops and buy up, dirt-cheap, the old hardback fiction books which come from house clearances and never sell. Check a few library catalogues on the Internet, and if none of them list those titles with good period stories with lots of details, you're away. There are box-loads of that sort of stuff out there that no-one had read for forty years or more; its dead easy.

What struck me about much of the material in the Fenwicks' book was how close the personality profiles of a fair proportion of the past life remembrances are to those of UFO abductees, and the similarity between some of these stories and those produced by people with Caraboo Syndrome. We are dealing with imagination here.

Do the stories told by children who remember past lives differ from the stories produced by adults? Tom Shroder, a Washington Post journalist, travelled with Ian Stevenson in his 1997 trips to Lebanon and India in search of children who remembered past lives. These stories certainly lack the obvious romanticism of the letters to the *Daily Mail*, and Shroder soon becomes convinced that something very strange was going on, though perhaps not reincarnation.

These are indeed mundane past lives in many ways, but violent death plays a large part in them, events which perhaps might have lead to lots of gossip and stories.

The problem with so much of the material presented by Shroder is that it is old hat. The events took place years ago, and we are now dealing with stories which have been told many times. Newer cases seem to be vaguer. Sometimes there are hints that something is not quite right; the little boy, for example who seems to be rehearsing lines, even correcting a mistake at one point. There are glimpses of rather odd family dynamics. One other thing which struck me, but which Shroder doesn't explicitly comment on, is that Stevenson is either very focused or obsessed, depending on how you spin it. On a couple of occasions they end up in pretty hairy situations, with increasingly menacing atmospheres, yet Stevenson just ploughs on with his set-piece questions. I got the distinct impression from those examples, that Stevenson may not be particularly sensitive to subtle nuances in the cases. He knows what he is looking for and is damn well going to find it.

There seems little doubt also that Stevenson is a charismatic figure who is able to inspire great devotion among his staff, and to enthuse them with his hopes; a salesman for reincarnation perhaps. He certainly gains Shroder's admiration fairly quickly, though Shroder turns out not to have been the sceptic he started the book claiming to be: a synchronicity in his teenage years convincing him that "we're all connected by forces beyond our understanding".

The problem with the claims of reincarnation is that they do not come in a vacuum: they contradict all the collective knowledge of how personality is contingent on the brain. Shroder quotes someone trying to explain this with the old noise/signal adage, but neurological changes don't just render the same old personality a bit blurry round the edges, they can, on occasion, fundamentally change it. Specific damage can cause specific deficits and changes. Against this, people's memories of the gnomic utterances of children constitute rather weak evidence.

Monorail, from page 2

equations to the exclusion of dreams, male to the exclusion of female, machines to the exclusion of mysteries". At that time Jerry could clearly have made a good career move by becoming a speech writer for Prince Charles! Of course, we understand that in unguarded moments Al Gore still comes up with that sort of thing, and though Jerry has later denounced these views as 'romantic', they are still widely influential and have led on to a variety of relativist, post-modernist and related ideologies.

It was not, I think, the absence of 'wonder' or awe which led to the revolt against science, more a lack of human-centredness and human scale. There is little awe and wonder in the alternatives proposed; certainly not in paranormalism or fortuneism, much of which is profoundly banal. They offer the easy comforts of belief in life after death, a universe filled with 'people of a different shape', a planned landscape garden universe, created and overseen by a Capability Brown God. The universe of modern science is not that, it is utterly 'other', wild and inhuman, a raw force of creation and destruction of which we are an accidental by-product.

Yet Jerry also saw surprisingly clearly that the fruits of untrammelled romanticism would be "the return of the repressed" which would "overwhelm the world and usher in era of madness, superstition, terror, war, anarchy and fascism". That, written in the early 1970s seems hauntingly prophetic, as the failure of modernism to win the hearts and minds of the people has led to the fundamentalist revivals from Iran to Afghanistan, the killing fields of Algeria, the awaking of the old ethnic conflicts in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, the religious fundamentalism, earth-first environmentalism, new-ageism and post-modernism of the West, the collapse of the nation state in large regions of Africa. If the candle of modernity fails, we might end up in Carl Sagan's 'demon haunted world' after all. To paraphrase Winston Churchill, the Universal Denmark is a damned bad idea, whose only redeeming feature is that all the alternatives are so much worse.

Perhaps the balance can be restored by realising that human beings, human imagination, culture, art, science and technology and their products are all as much part of the totality of nature, and as worthy as our awe and sense of the sacred, as any mountain peak or forest glade.



Hold the Back Page

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Electro allergies

Are the electromagnetic pollution theories of Albert Budden about to re-emerge after so long out of the spotlight? (No-one yet seems to have seen the promised documents from the JPL and the Max Planck Institute confirming the efficacy of the Hutchison Device.) I only ask because of a curious item which appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* (7 September 2000) about 79-year-old Joan Stock, a retired secretary from near Bristol. Ms Stock apparently suffers from piercing headaches, blurred vision and nausea in the presence of computers.

Unnamed 'experts' said her brain was allergic electromagnetic fields in computer-controlled products, and she has to live in a microchip-free environment, watching a black and white television and driving a fifteen year old car. Her doctor explained that her brain "produced insufficient waves to counteract the modern frequencies emitted by computers". Perhaps any visiting neurologists could tell us if this makes sense, and what the difference might be between 'modern' frequencies and the sorts of old-fashioned frequencies we know and love?

Her G.P., David Dowson, reassures us that this is a very rare condition, and that although many people might think it a psychological problem, that is certainly not the case. Dr Mark Payne - "a leading electricity researcher based in Solihull", anyone know anything of him? - claims that one in a hundred people "suffers mild symptoms when close to power sources".

If Ms Stock does indeed have such reactions when close to microchips, she could be very useful to abduction researchers; any implant up an abductee's nose should make the lady come over all funny on the spot.

[sic] as a parrot

Those who follow on the Internet the words of wisdom of Jerome Clark, will have noticed his liberal use of [sic] to indicate a grammatical mistake or typographical error in any documents he is quoting. Naturally, when quoting from Magonia his pages are generously scattered with such annotations. On the other hand, we have seldom used the [sic] very much ourselves, on the 'let he who is without sin...' principle, and quietly correct

any obvious typos we spot.

However a curious thing came to light when recently consulting Clark's excellent UFO Encyclopedia. In the bibliography is a reference to an article by *Merseyside UFO Bulletin's* erstwhile Science Editor, Alan Sharp in the Summer 1971 issue. Entitled 'Do you ken John Keel', it is a biting criticism of the then-fashionable theories of that American researcher. And the title, as any schoolboy knows, is a mild pun on the old hunting song 'Do you ken John Peel'. However in his bibliography, Clark takes the liberty of translating this, and renders it 'Do you know John Keel' making the punning reference pointless.

As one of those much-feared librarians, I was always taught that in bibliographical citations, titles should always be rendered exactly as shown in the original. For example, in British books listing American publications, such curiosities as 'color' and 'labor' are always faithfully spelled out. As an experienced editor, and one always ready to throw [sics] around to demonstrate his punctiliousness, Clark must have known this, but presumably thought that prospective purchasers of his monumental tome would be unable to work out a simple Britishism. I know it's petty, but for some reason I find it disproportionately irritating, and expect better from an English major like Jerome Clark.

Art and abductions

Twice now, we've been too late to alert our readers to the marvellous art installation 'Witness' by Susan Hiller. By the time this Magonia is out its, exhibition at Tate Britain will have closed, but we will try to let you know if it is scheduled to appear at any other galleries.

I saw it earlier this summer at a small gallery in Notting Hill, in a converted chapel. You climbed up a spiral staircase into an almost pitch-black room, lit only by three circular stained glass windows, and tiny, very focused spotlights which illuminated pools of light on the floor. The first thing you were aware of was a constant whispered muttering of hundreds of voices. Walking into the room, a forest of wires suspended from the ceiling brushed against you, and you realised that the sounds were coming from small earpieces attached to them. The ceiling spots made these tiny

speakers cast dozens of flying saucer-like shadows on the floor. Putting one of the speakers to your ear, you heard a witness describing their UFO experience: an abduction, a close-encounter or a lights-in-the-sky sighting. Some of the accounts were in English, others in French, Italian, Russian, Spanish, and other languages I couldn't identify.

From time to time, as you moved among the wires all the little ear-pieces would gradually start reciting the same account, so one voice would surround you, seemingly coming from everywhere and nowhere; then gradually the single account would break up again into a hundred different voices. The whole effect was strange and quite magical.

Hiller is obviously someone attuned to the strange and Fortean. Another installation, *Dream Machine*, is part of the Ghost Machines exhibition at Camden Arts Centre, north London, which she has curated. (until 29 October, then at the Glyn Vivian Gallery, Swansea from 18 November to 21 January 2001), and uses a soundtrack based on Raudive's recordings of the 'voices of the dead'. Hiller also features in the British Art Show 5, which will be in Cardiff until November, then moving to Birmingham until January. Here she presents two video projections *Wild Talents* and *Psi Girls* depicting telekinetic episodes from television and cinema.

An interview with Hiller appeared in the London *Evening Standard* (14 September 2000) and is available on their website, www.thisislondon.com, then do a site search on 'hiller'.



Susan Hiller